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ATHEISM IN PHILOSOPHY,
AND
OTHER ESSAYS.

BY
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"REASON IN RELIGION," "PRIMEVAL WORLD OF HEBREW TRADITION,"
"WAYS OF THE SPIRIT," ETC.



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PHILOSOPHIC ATHEISM.

“Philosophy, Socrates, if pursued in moderation and at the proper age, is an elegant accomplishment; but too much philosophy is the ruin of human life.”— *Callicles, in Plato's Gorgias.*

PHILOSOPHIC ATHEISM.¹

INTRODUCTION.

BY philosophic atheism I mean speculative denial of a supermundane, conscious intelligence,—theories of the universe which regard it as the product of blind force, or as a self-subsisting, self-governing, independent being. Of these theories, however repugnant to practical reason and religious faith, we are not authorized to say with Milton,—

“Of such doctrine never was there school
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.”²

Justice compels us to admit the claim of some who have reasoned thus, to be counted philosophers,—lovers of wisdom, seekers of truth.

¹ Not to be confounded with the scientific atheism of the Positivists.

² *Samson Agonistes*, 297–299.

The moment we begin to speculate about the universe, there arises the question of origin. Philosophy, even atheistic philosophy, cannot stop short of the "*primordia rerum*;" it wants to know "*unde Natura creet res, auctet alatque*." The arch-atheist of antiquity could not rest in a given phenomenal world, but pushed his inquiry, says his great commentator,¹ "*extra flammantia moenia mundi*." The question Whence? is found to be involved in the questions What? and How? And here it is that philosophic atheists differ among themselves almost as widely as they differ from theists. I select as illustrations two prominent examples, an ancient and a modern, representing two opposite types,—Epicurus and Schopenhauer.

¹ Lucretius: *De Rerum Natura*, i. 73, 74.

EPICURUS.

THERE are few philosophers, and indeed few men, about whom such opposite opinions have been formed and such different judgments pronounced as those concerning Epicurus. To speak of him as an atheist at all, in the view of some, is to misrepresent him. There have not been wanting defenders of his philosophy who acquit it of that charge, and have even sought to adjust its principles with Christian doctrine. Prominent among them is Gassendi, who published toward the middle of the seventeenth century an elaborate account of Epicurus, entitled "*De vita, moribus, et philosophia Epicuri*;" to which he afterward added "*Animadversiones in Diogenem Laertium*," the biographer of Epicurus, and also a "*Syntagma philosophiæ Epicuri*." Among ancient critics, his best advocate was a leader of the sect most opposed to his own,—the Stoic Seneca.

I call him an atheist in philosophy; for though he recognizes the existence of the national gods, it is only as accidents, not as powers. He recognizes no divine agency in his system. His gods have no right to be, in the light of his philosophy. They have none of the attributes proper to deity;

they are chance collections of atoms, destined sooner or later, like all other creatures, to perish and dissolve. To him they have only an ethical import. Finding them fixed in the popular belief, he uses them as illustrations of a blessed life. The testimony of the ancients is decisive on this subject. Lucretius makes it his special merit to have freed his followers from the yoke of religion.¹

As to his morals, the authorities differ. Plutarch represents him as licentious; but, on the whole, the balance of testimony gives the impression of a man who led a blameless, and unquestionably a very frugal and abstemious, life.

An Athenian by nation, he was born in Samos, where his father, as *κληροῦχος*, had settled himself on his allotted estate, in the third year of the 109th Olympiad, about 342 B. C., on the seventh day of the month Gamelion.² His father, Neocles, earned a meagre livelihood by giving instruction in reading and writing. His mother, Chärestrata, added a little to the *res angusta* by her magic arts; being what would be called in modern times a fortune-teller. Her social position was of the lowest; but Epicurus says she had in her body all the atoms which go to make a philosopher. The only

¹ De Rerum Natura, *ubi supra*.

² The marriage month, the seventh of the Attic year, comprising part of January and part of February.

memorable thing recorded of his boyhood is the well-known anecdote mentioned by Apollodorus. His teacher was explaining the theogony of Hesiod, how everything sprang from original chaos. "But whence sprang chaos?" the boy demanded. The question revealed an inquisitive mind. The chaos of Greek mythology seems to have served the same purpose as the tortoise of Hindu speculation. It was the ultimate ground, the foundation of all things. You must stop somewhere in your inquiry. With the Hindu the question was one of statics; and he stopped with the big tortoise, which bears the elephant, which bears something else, which bears the world. With the Greek the question was one of genesis; and he stopped with chaos: from that all things were made. But the boy Epicurus would not stop there. What made chaos? It was a boyish inquisitiveness, nothing more; the man Epicurus found, after all, nothing better than chaos to begin with or end with.

At the age of eighteen he first visited Athens, where it is thought he may have studied philosophy in the Old Academy. Plato had left it, and the city, and the world, a quarter of a century before; but the school on the old Platonic foundation remained. It was run by Xenocrates. It is not very likely that Epicurus was admitted to its teachings. He probably wanted the qualification

of a knowledge of geometry, since he affected to despise mathematical science. But the Old Academy met applicants for admission with the warning, *μηδεὶς ἀγεωμέτρητος εἰσίτω*; and Xenocrates is said to have been particularly strict in enforcing that condition.

His stay in Athens at that time is supposed to have been shortened by political troubles, which forced him to rejoin his father, who was then a teacher at Colophon; but that, too, was a brief sojourn. He followed for some years a vagabond life, studying and teaching in various places, founding schools at Mytilene and Lampsacus, over which he presided for several years. Finally, in 307 B. C., at the age of thirty-five, he returned to Athens, where he spent the remainder of his life.

He had chosen his career. Philosophy claimed him, drew him; and if predetermination of will, and devotion of every faculty and means to that pursuit are proofs of vocation, a philosopher he was morally called to be. His intellectual qualifications are not so apparent. His aptitude for transcendental speculation or fresh discovery in the realms of thought was small. Neither the intuitive nor the analytic faculty in him seems to have been constitutionally robust or happily developed. His theory halts, and his logic stumbles. A consistent and intelligible view of the universe,

with or without a God, or a rational psychology, it was not in him to construct. He was equally deficient in the power of intellectual appropriation. He failed to comprehend the speculations of other men; existing systems he had not the patience to fathom. He borrowed chiefly from Democritus, but travesties the Democritic theory which he uses. And because he was unable to master previous systems, he abuses their authors. He vilifies the thinkers of his day, as Schopenhauer does the thinkers of his. Cicero says of him: "Contumeliosissime Aristotelem vexavit, Phædoni Socratico turpissime maledixit." ¹ Even Democritus, his master, does not escape his disparagement; "in Democritum ipsum quem secutus est, ingratus." He seems to have imbibed little or nothing of the scientific culture of his time, which he affected to despise. Learning of every kind he treated with disdain. "Non satis politus," says Cicero, "iis artibus quas qui tenent eruditi appellantur." *Πᾶσαν παιδείαν μακάριοι φεύγετε*, "Shun all learning, ye blessed!" he writes in a letter to Pythocles; reminding one of a certain other Epicurean, who declared that "much study is a weariness of the flesh," and that "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." He nevertheless verified by his own example the

¹ De Natura Deorum, i. 33.

confession of the Hebrew, that "of making many books there is no end;" for he is said to have been one of the most voluminous of the writers of antiquity. "*Πολυγραφώτατος*," says Diogenes Laertius, his biographer. Three hundred volumes are ascribed to him. They have not survived; and if the fragment *Περὶ Φύσεως*, discovered in Herculaneum and edited by Orelli, is a fair sample, literature has suffered little by their loss. A prolific writer, but a poor scholar, in the great intellectual movement which distinguished his century above all preceding epochs he had no active, scarcely a passive, part. For him Plato had lived, and Aristotle was living, in vain. He boasted himself an *autodidaktos*, and disclaimed all indebtedness to those who preceded him. Yet as an ethicist he built on Socratic ground. He reverted to Socrates, just as Schopenhauer, repudiating Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, went back to Kant. Ritter regards his philosophy as an episode, an interpolation in Greek philosophy; but Steinhart — more correctly, I think — recognizes in it a lineal offspring of the great Socratic movement.

His abstinence from public affairs and the service of the state is ascribed by his partial biographer, Diogenes Laertius, to extreme modesty. He had certainly what is called a retiring dispo-

sition. Retirement was a cardinal point in his practical philosophy, the logical result of his fundamental principle, *λάθε βιώσας*. "I never sought," he says, "to please the people; for the things which I know, the populace disapproves, and the things which the populace approves, I am ignorant of." There might be other reasons for this abstinence. Since Athens had lost her independence, and Greece her political importance, men of talent were no longer in demand. The motive which once induced the ablest minds to engage in public affairs had ceased to operate. The state had no need of philosophy, and philosophy ignored the state.

Having chosen Athens for his residence, and finding nothing congenial in other schools, Epicurus adopted a course which characterizes the genius of the man, and which properly dates his philosophic career. He purchased for eighty minæ (about \$300) a lot of land within the walls of the city, threw it open to the public, and gathered around him a society of intelligent men and women, who with him devoted themselves to philosophic pursuits; *i. e.*, to philosophic discussion and social converse. I say intelligent women. The women, it is true, so far as I can learn, belonged to the class of *hetairai*,¹ — a

¹ Literally companions; not always, but most commonly, concubines.

class whom their own sex in most countries exclude from the pale of their society, but who seem in Athens to have occupied a less degrading position than elsewhere, and, what is singular, to have been the best educated and most agreeable women of the city. They are the only women one hears much about in Athenian history. Aspasia, as a foreigner, belonged technically to this class, though not in the baser sense.

With what right the κῆποι 'Ἐπικούρου were called a garden is not apparent. Of horticulture there is no record. Gassendi thinks the word took its name from the region of the city to which it belonged, — the Κῆποι. Pliny, on the other hand, in his "Natural History," testifies that Epicurus introduced the custom of having gardens in the city. "Primus hoc instituit Epicurus otii magister. Usque ad eum, moris non fuerat, in oppidis habitari rura." It could not fail that the presence of women of the class I have named should give rise to scandalous reports concerning the morals of the school. Its enemies — some of them deserters from the company — wrote and circulated disgusting accounts of the manner of life and orgies of these philosophers, which have probably given rise to the bad repute which attached to the sect among the ancients, — to the

“porci ex Epicuri grege.” The curious in such matters may find the scandal recorded by Plutarch and Bayle, — recorded, not adopted. The best authorities entirely discredit all these allegations. The respectable opponents of Epicurus declare him free from all taint of licentiousness. Chrysippus the Stoic, his chief antagonist, who certainly would not have missed the opportunity of a credible accusation, not only exonerates, but pronounces him incapable of sensual passion. Cicero and Seneca vindicate his character, while condemning his doctrine. On the whole, it was a pure and beautiful life which those garden-philosophers lived, if not, as judged by Stoic and Christian standards, a very heroic one.

An inscription at the entrance of the garden welcomed the visitor with the words: “Guest, it is good to be here; here pleasure is the supreme good.” And certainly there was never before, and has never been since, a pleasure party — a company of men and women assembled for the purpose of enjoyment — whose views of enjoyment were so severe, and whose style of pleasure was so refined. “Spare Fast, that oft with Gods doth diet,” was caterer to these voluptuaries; Sobriety the butler that officiated at their carousals. “Here barley-cakes and fresh spring-water,” the visitor was told, “are freely dispensed. The garden will not tempt

you with artificial delicacies, but will satisfy natural hunger with natural food. Will you not be well entertained?" "Such," exclaims our Greek Dryasdust,¹ "was the man who taught that pleasure is the chief end," — *τοιοῦτος ἦν ὁ τὴν ἡδονὴν εἶναι τέλος δογματίζων*. The trifling cost of this garden-life was defrayed by voluntary contributions from individuals thus associated. There was no community of goods, as with the Essenes and the Pythagoreans. There was no obligation on the rich to make common stock of their wealth, or even to bear their part of the expense. Epicurus disdained such enforced communism; he viewed it as a sign of mistrust. True friends must have that confidence one toward another which without any formal institution would give them the virtual command of each other's goods. It was a kind of perennial picnic, where each contributed according to his humor. Never has the world seen finer examples of friendships based on intellectual affinity, never a society bound by sublimer trust. Really, those Greeks had a style of their own beyond the capabilities of modern life. Imagine in some modern capital—say Paris or New York—a public garden offering pleasure as the supreme good, open to all classes and all reputations, and continuing for centuries to furnish

¹ Diogenes Laertius.

this sort of entertainment, and to draw high and low by the simple attraction of philosophic inquiry. A remarkable feature of those conferences was the presence and participation of slaves ; and a beautiful trait in the character of Epicurus, noticed by Seneca, is his treatment of this class of fellow-beings, whom he called his friends, — thus proving his superiority to the prejudices of his age, and illustrating by his own example the humanity commended in his doctrine. “*Habeant enim sane nomen quod illis Epicurus noster imposuit.*”¹

Besides this garden, in which most of his time was spent, he possessed, according to Diogenes Laertius, a house in another part of the city, in the *demos Melite*, — a house of small dimensions, but which his boundless hospitality and the strong attraction of his friendship filled with guests. Cicero extols this characteristic of the man, — the high value he set on friendship, the place assigned to it in his theory of life and in his practice. I quote the passage from the “*De Finibus* :”²

“Epicurus says of friendship, that of all the things which wisdom shall have provided for a happy life, there is none which surpasses friendship, nothing more fruitful, nothing more delightful (*nihil esse majus amicitia, nihil uberius, nihil jucundius*). And not with his words alone

¹ Seneca, Ep. 107.

² Lib. i. c. 20.

maintained he this, but far more with his life, with his deeds, with his manners. The significance of this fact may be inferred from ancient fiction. Many and various as are the stories which have come to us from the highest antiquity, there are found in them scarce three pairs of friends, from Theseus to Orestes. But Epicurus, in a single house, and that a small one, entertained what troops of friends bound together by how great a consent and conspiracy of love ! (*Quam magnos, quantaque amoris conspiratione, consentientes tenuit amicorum greges !*) And the Epicureans at the present day maintain the same practice (*quod fit etiam nunc ab Epicureis*)."

From all I can learn I should say that no man of his day was more widely and deeply beloved ; and what renders this attachment more remarkable is that the subject of it appears to have been entirely deficient in the sprightliness and humor which season social intercourse, and which constituted so prominent a characteristic of his countrymen. A man of unusual gravity ; Cicero says of him : "*Homo non aptissimus ad jocandum, minimeque resipiens patriam.*"

His temperate habits did not secure him the exemption which might have been expected from some of the worst forms of bodily disease, *στραγγουρία καὶ δυσεντερικὰ πάθη*, which he bore with unshrinking fortitude, and in the midst of which he died, foreseeing his end, aware that the day of his greatest suffering was his last. He called it

a blessed and joyful day ; and in that spirit wrote to Idomeneus ¹ a letter which Laertius has preserved to us : “ On this happy and closing day of my life I write to thee this : ‘ While suffering with strangury and dysentery pains incapable of increase, I am compensated in all this by the joy I have in the memory of our former discussions.’ ” Seneca alludes to this heroic confession in an argument with a friend on the goods of life. “ I will give you,” he says, “ Epicurus his classification of goods, — very similar to this of mine. There are some things which he would prefer for his allotment, such as ease of body, free from all annoyance, and the calm of a mind rejoicing in the contemplation of its goods. There are others which though he would rather they should not befall him, he nevertheless praises and approves ; such as the experience of ill health and very severe pains. And this was the case with Epicurus on that last and most blessed day of his life ; for he says that he was suffering tortures of the bladder and of ulcerated bowels which admitted of no increase, but that nevertheless it was for him a blessed day.” We cannot, I think, deny the praise, if not of high heroism, at least of an equanimity more germane to the Stoic than

¹ Cicero says to Hermachus ; but I follow the authority of Diogenes Laertius.

the Epicurean doctrine in such an ending. Here was a man about to lapse, as he supposed, into endless nothing; for a future existence was something undreamed of in his philosophy. The atoms which for seventy-two years in joint-stock company had carried on a certain life-business called Epicurus, were about to dissolve partnership, break up their establishment, not one of them ever again in eternal time, as he believed, to resume that business and renew that life. What, in view of this impending wreck, is his resource and consolation?—the man who held that pleasure is the supreme good, according to whose theory everything else was dross? If he had n't that, he had nothing; his doctrine had failed in the final test. But the fangs of mortal disease were clutching at his heartstrings—pains that admitted of no increase. How manage the pursuit of pleasure in such straits? What pleasure for a man without a future, hemmed in between bodily anguish and death? Future there is none; the present is torment; but the past remains. He recalls discussions with Idomeneus in years gone by. The joy of that remembrance compensates all. Was ever philosopher so put to it for support *in extremis*?

“Oh, who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?”

Plutarch pours contempt on the story. "A man may better see the resemblance of his own face in a troubled deep or a storm, than a smooth and smiling remembrance of past pleasure in a body tortured with such lancing and rending pains."

He died at the age of seventy-two, in the second year of the 127th Olympiad (270 B. C.) His very minute testament, preserved by Laertius, is characteristic, and exhibits at once his kindly disposition and his self-conceit. He gave their freedom to several of his slaves. The bulk of his property he bequeathed to two of his confidants, Timocrates and Amynomachus, who were to come under bonds to provide for the maintenance and education of the sons of his friend and disciple, Metrodorus, until their majority, and also to furnish a dower for his daughter. To another friend, then living, he bequeathed a life-interest in the "garden," and appointed him his successor, as head of the school, with the provision that every future successor while in office should have the usufruct of the garden, which should thus continue to be the headquarters of the sect. He moreover directed that a portion of the interest of his property should be devoted to the annual celebration of his birthday, and to cover the expense of a feast on the twentieth of each

month, in honor of him and his friend Metrodorus. This proposition Cicero severely criticises, partly on the ground of vanity and inconsistency with the teachings of one who professed to hold that nothing pertains to us after death, and partly on the ground that a philosopher, and especially a physicist, ought to know that the idea of an annual birthday is all nonsense. The same day, he says, can occur but once, nor indeed its likeness, unless, after the lapse of many thousand years, all the heavenly bodies shall come to have precisely the same position. "Quid verene? Potest esse dies sæpius, qui semel fuit? Certe non potest. An ejusdem modi? ne id quidem, nisi, cum multa annorum intercesserint millia, ut omnium siderum, eodem, unde profecta sint, fiat ad unum tempus reversio. Nullus est igitur cujusquam dies natalis." Democritus, Epicurus' great oracle, would not, he thinks, have acted thus. It was not the part of one who had traversed in his mind "innumerabiles mundos, infinitasque regiones, quarum nulla esset ora, nulla extremitas."

It was not until after his death that the fame of Epicurus attained the expansion which Plutarch charges him with secretly coveting, in spite of his *λάθε βιώσας*. "The truth is," says Plutarch, "Epicurus himself allows there are some pleasures derived from fame. And, indeed, why

should he not, when he himself had such a furious lechery and wriggling after glory as made him not only disown his masters, and scuffle about syllables and accents with his fellow-pedant, Democritus, whose grammar-rules he stole verbatim, and tell his disciples that there never was a wise man in the world besides himself, but also to put it in writing how Colotes rendered homage to him, as he was one day philosophizing, by touching his knees." Whatever of justice or injustice there may be in this accusation, it would seem that Epicurus anticipated the posthumous glory which awaited him, when he wrote to Idome-neus, who aspired to political distinction: "If you are smitten with the love of glory, my letters will make you more famous than these objects which you adore, and for whose sake you are adored." So Shakspeare's sonnet promises his friend, —

"And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent."

Famous he became. His followers bore his image engraved on cups and rings; his native city erected statues to his memory. The school flourished, the sect increased; it prevailed in Greece, it found followers in Rome. St. Paul, three centuries later, encountered its disciples at Athens;

and Seneca, contemporary with Paul, writes to his friend Lucilius : —

“Glory is the shadow of virtue ; it will accompany even those who desire it not. But as shadows sometimes precede and sometimes follow, so our renown is sometimes before us, and offers itself to our sight ; and sometimes it is turned from us ; but the later it is, the greater it is, when envy has died away. . . . Look at Epicurus, whom not only the learned, but the ignorant multitude, admire. This man was unknown in the very city of Athens where he hid. Survivor of Metrodorus by many years, in a letter in which he celebrates their mutual friendship with grateful remembrance, he adds at last that, possessed of such goods, it was no injury to Metrodorus and himself that the nobles of Greece not only ignored, but scarcely knew them by report. . . . Metrodorus also confesses in one of his letters that he and Epicurus had not the distinction they deserved ; but afterward adds, that a great name was in store for them with those who were willing to follow in their steps. No virtue can remain concealed ; or if concealed, it is not virtue’s loss (*nulla latet virtus, et latuisse non ipsius est damnum*).”

It is not very likely that new discoveries will throw new light on the man whose personality has proved such a power in the world, whose characteristic idea yet lives, and has representatives still, although the school and the confession are long since extinct. We have all the materials we are likely to have for forming our judgment of his character and life. What shall the verdict be ? 1

cannot accept that of Plutarch concerning the man, though Plutarch rightly judged the doctrine. I incline to that of Cicero in the Tusculan Questions:¹ “Venit Epicurus, homo minime malus vel potius vir optimus.” An austere gravity, a kind of Quaker simplicity, I judge to have been his type. In his letters, instead of the customary salutation, *χαίρε!* hail! he is said to have substituted an admonition to act well, — *Εὖ πράττειν*; and we are told that in his treatise on Rhetoric he named but one excellence, that of plainness.

A simple, grave, and kindly man; a man who meant well and who lived well, if that garden theory of his be allowed. But when we ask what fruits of enduring worth that garden yielded to continuous culture of three hundred years, — what venerable name, to be ranked with the heroes of the Porch, with the Catos and Antonines, the Epicurean school has produced, — the answer is a blank. A blank in history is the school of Epicurus, though not altogether a blank in letters. One poem at least, of prime renown, it has given to the world, the consummate exponent of its doctrine. The poem of Lucretius, “*De Rerum Natura*,” is ranked by the critics among the foremost — by some, indeed, as the very foremost — in Roman literature. Ovid predicted for it a fame

¹ Lib. ii. c. 19.

coeval with the earth's duration. We are safe in pronouncing it the first of didactic poems. It is one of the very few of that class which have won for themselves an enduring fame. Pope's "Essay on Man" is the nearest approach to it in that kind. And this is the only fruit that has reached us from that Epicurean garden, the only product that remains of a school which in point of popularity occupied the foremost place among the philosophic systems of antiquity and filled the classic world with its fame.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF EPICURUS.

In my characterization of Epicurus I spoke of the poverty of his intellectual culture, and noticed the want in him both of the intuitive and the analytic faculty. For speculative inquiry, for discoveries in the realm of thought, he had no aptitude; but for practical philosophy a very decided, inborn vocation. Philosophy for him was a rule of life — *ἐνέργεια τὸν εὐδαίμονα βίον περιποιούσα*. He sought in it precisely what Socrates had taught men to seek in it, — practical well-being. Especially he sought in it freedom, — the freedom which Athens, deprived of her autonomy, and tending to political downfall, no longer enjoyed. He sought emancipation from the yoke of superstition.

Lucretius, as we have seen, celebrates this motive in one of his sublimest strains. But though the philosophy of Epicurus is mainly practical, he did speculate; he was given to system-making; he had his theory of knowledge and his theory of the universe, as well as his theory and rule of life. And so his philosophy, as Diogenes Laertius tells us, divides itself into three systems, the *κανωνικόν*, which we may translate psychology, the *φυσικόν*, and the *ἠθικόν*, — Psychology, Physic, and Ethic.

The Psychology need occupy us but a very few moments; it is crude, even for that period. The prime source of all knowledge in the view of Epicurus is sensible experience. The objects without us throw off certain images; these are received by the senses and communicated to the mind. The senses are infallible: but they have no memory; they can deal only with what is immediately present. An internal faculty operates on the images which sensuous perception has lodged in the mind. Then the sensations — that is, pleasure and pain — advise us of what is conducive or detrimental to our well-being. Hence three criteria of truth, — perception, *αἴσθησις*, conception, *πρόληψις*, and sensation, *πάθος*. *Πρόληψις* — including memory, understanding, reason, judgment, all in one — stores away the images which enter the

brain through the senses, calls them up at pleasure, arranges, compares, and draws conclusions from them. Our perceptions are always correct, because they are an efflux from the things themselves. Our opinions are only so far correct as they agree with the testimony of the senses ; where they contradict or differ from this they are false. But whence arises this disagreement, and its consequent error ? Epicurus' solution of this question is peculiar. Perception, he says, is a motion from without ; opinion, being the result of internal contemplation of the images thrown in upon the mind, is a motion from within. If the motion from within is continuous with the motion from without, like the co-ordinates of an hyperbola, then the opinion is correct ; but if it disconnects or traverses the motion from without, it is false. Thus all knowledge, all truth, is referred at last to material phenomena. All ideas not derivable from these he regards as illusions. He allows no laws of thought, no regulative faculty inherent in the mind. Sensible experience not only supplies the material of thought, but determines all correct thinking ; and sensible experience is a lawless aggregation of insulated phenomena. The science of geometry not being founded on sensible experience, or not solely on that, he repudiated as not sufficiently evident. Here is something that marks

the difference between the ancient and modern mind, and discovers a real progress in mental experience. No modern sceptic would dream of questioning the validity of mathematical evidence within its own legitimate sphere. No modern would venture to subordinate the certitude of geometrical demonstration to that of sensible experience. But perhaps what Epicurus really meant was that geometry deals only with abstractions; and that seeing there are no such things in nature as the triangles and circles which constitute the topics of that science, they have not for us the evidence which comes with tangible realities.

In his *Physics*, his *Ontology*, although it was his hobby and chief pride, Epicurus appears to no better advantage. His system not only wants the merit of originality, but adds to that defect a misapprehension and a consequent distortion and perversion of the doctrine it undertakes to present. His atomic theory, according to unanimous testimony, he took from Democritus, an Eleatic philosopher of the fourth century B. C., a man of robust intellect and universal learning, greatly the superior of Epicurus as well in the intuitive as in the discursive faculty. He belonged to what is called the New Eleatic, distinguished from the Old by the more materialistic and sensuous direction of its thought. The Old Eleatics applied themselves

to the study of the absolute ; the New investigated the phenomenal world.¹

Epicurus, then, adopted the atomic theory of Democritus. Starting with the axiom that nothing can produce nothing (οὐδὲν γίνεται ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος), he held that the worlds were formed from atoms which must have had an eternal existence. In the beginning these atoms existed only *in vacuo*,—atoms of various forms and dimensions. From the confluence, collision, and concretion of these atoms were formed the bodies that compose our world and all the worlds that are, which he supposes to be infinite. The universe is constituted of infinitesimal atoms ; it will one day dissolve into atoms again. But the atoms are eternal ; they will remain, and form new worlds ; and so on in endless succession. But how happened the atoms to flow together while yet they existed as separate indivisible units ? Here we come upon the main point of difference between Epicurus and his original. Democritus had endowed his atoms with an aboriginal motion ; he started them with an impact, πλήγη.² Epicurus thought this unphilosophical. But how did he

¹ Eleatic, from Elea, a town in Lower Italy colonized by the Greeks. Not that all the philosophers so named resided there, but because it was the residence of some of the more distinguished among them ; *e. g.* Xenophanes and Parmenides.

² Cicero, *De Fato*, 20.

attempt to correct the error? He gave his atoms gravitation. They have weight, and by virtue of their weight they gravitated downward. Fancy, then, a snowfall of atoms through endless space; a snow which, like that described by Emerson, "seems nowhere to alight"! But unfortunately for this hypothesis, in the absence of concrete worlds, in pure space, there is no up nor down, and nothing to gravitate to. Our philosopher, in attempting to improve upon Democritus, substitutes a greater absurdity for a less. Then again he saw that his atoms, if they had only this one downward motion, each descending forever in a plumb-line, would never in all eternity collide. So what does he do to remedy this difficulty? He adds to their downward a sideward motion — very slight, just a little cant, the smallest possible declination. But by what power or efficient cause this sidelong motion was effected, or how, if all the atoms have it equally, the difficulty is remedied, does not appear. But Epicurus, it seems, had another purpose in giving his atoms a sidelong motion, besides that of effecting a junction. Although a materialist, he believed in freedom of will, and found it convenient to refer that freedom to the aboriginal atoms. They were not mere passive subjects of a motion impressed upon them by necessity; they exercised some choice in the

direction they assumed, they chose to go a little askew. Crude as this notion is, it shadows forth a very important truth; namely this, that human action (which Epicurus would refer to the particles that compose our organism) is partly the product of inevitable circumstance, and partly of free-will,—human life the diagonal resultant of these two forces.

I have found nothing in Diogenes Laertius respecting this declination of the atoms; my authority is Cicero. In the treatise “*De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*,” cast in the form of a colloquy between L. Torquatus, C. Triarius, and Cicero, Torquatus, the advocate of Epicurus, asks why Cicero, who does not, like most of his opponents, hate the man, cannot accept the philosopher,—whom I, he says, “*quem ego arbitror unum vidisse verum, maximisque erroribus, hominum animos liberavisse, et omnia tradidisse quæ pertinent ad bene beateque vivendum.*” He thinks it must be because Epicurus wrote in so plain a style; he had not Plato’s, and Aristotle’s, and Theophrastus’ ornate diction.

“For I can scarcely believe that you will not allow the truth of his doctrine. You are mistaken, says Cicero. His style offends me not, he writes intelligibly, and that is all I ask of a philosopher, although I despise not eloquence if he has it to give. It is his matter with

which I am dissatisfied, and that in very many respects. But so many men, so many minds (*quot homines, tot sententiæ*). I may be mistaken (*falli igitur possumus*). [Being pressed for the grounds of his dissent, he presents his objections.] *Principio, in physicis, quibus maxime gloriatur, primum totus est alienus. Democrito adjicit perpauca, mutans, sed ita, ut ea quæ corrigere vult mihi quidem depravare videatur.* There are many things in *both* which I do not approve, and especially this, — that whereas there are two things to be considered in nature: first, what the matter is of which all things are made; and second, the force by which they are made, — these men discourse only of matter, and neglect the efficient cause. (*Sed hoc commune vitium; illæ Epicuri propriæ ruinæ.*) For he [Epicurus] holds that these individual, solid bodies are carried by their own weight in a right line downward, — that being the natural motion of all bodies. But then the sharp-sighted man perceived that if this were the case, if all the atoms moved downward from on high, and that in a right line (*ad lineam*), one atom would never touch another. Therefore he added a comment: *Declinare dixit atomum perpauillum, quo nihil posset fieri minus.* Thus were brought about the embraces and copulations and adhesions of atoms among themselves, from which the world was made, and all its parts, and all that is therein."

This puerile fiction, he goes on to say, does not even accomplish its end. The law of gravitation is violated to no purpose, and we have the absurdity so repugnant to physicists, — an effect without a cause. This error would not have been

committed, Cicero thinks, if Epicurus had studied that geometry which he so despised.

The neglect of this science led to another blunder, in which he shows his inferiority to Democritus. To that philosopher the sun appeared to be a body of great magnitude, as it naturally would to a learned man and one skilled in geometry. Epicurus, on the contrary, set it down as being two feet in diameter (*bipedalis*), or thereabout; it might be a little more, or it might be a little less (*vel paulo aut majorem aut minorem*).¹

In another work, the treatise "*De Fato*," Cicero criticises more sharply the doctrine of the side-long movement of the atoms:—

"Declinat, inquit, atomus. Primum cur? Aliam enim quandam vim motus habebant a Democrito impulsionis quam plagam ille appellat: a te Epicure gravitatis et ponderis. Quæ ergo nova causa in natura est quæ declinet atomum? Aut num sortiuntur inter se quæ declinet, quæ non? Aut cur minimo declinent intervallo, majore non? Aut cur declinent uno minimo non declinent duobus aut tribus: [This is willing, not reasoning.] Optare hoc quidem est, non disputare. . . . Ita cum attulisset nullam causam quæ istam declinationem efficeret, tamen aliquid sibi dicere videtur, cum id dicat quod omnium mentes aspernentur ac respuant."²

Lucretius,³ the faithful interpreter of Epicurus,

¹ *De Finibus*, i. 6.

² *De Fato*, 20.

³ *De Rerum Natura*, ii. 221-290.

stoutly maintains the declination of the atoms, and finds in it the origin and ground of liberty.

David Hume, in his "Dialogues on Natural Religion," suggests a modification of the doctrine of Epicurus as a possible hypothesis of the origin of things.¹

There is nothing else in the physical theory of Epicurus that need detain us. Its other features, all his views of nature, are such as naturally result from his fundamental principle of fortuitousness,—the denial of any such thing as law or order or design in the universe,—and his doctrine of the certitude of sensible experience, which makes appearance the final test of truth.

It is the ethic of Epicurus that constitutes his real merit, and gives him a substantial title to the admiration and respect of mankind. Here he is truly original and great. His ethical philosophy was a bold attempt to establish on independent grounds, irrespective of all traditions of duty and religion, a rational rule and scheme of life. I do not mean to express approbation of his system. Its ground idea, however construed, is questionable. As commonly received, it is utterly false. Its rule of life fails to do justice to the possibilities of human nature. Tried by the highest ideal, it stands condemned; yet, as compared

¹ See Second Edition, London, p. 146.

with the Stoic, it has the shining merit of honesty. If it erred in affirming pleasure to be the supreme good, it did not deny the evil of pain; if its scheme of life was impracticable, the Stoic was equally so.

“For never yet was there philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently,
However they have writ the style of gods,
And made a pish! at chance and sufferance.”

The first suggestion of his ethical system Epicurus seems to have derived from the Cyrenaics, whose founder, Aristippus, a disciple of Socrates, but widely, in this, diverging from his master, made momentary enjoyment the prime object in life. *Ἡδονικοί*, voluptuaries, they were termed, in accordance with this trait. Epicurus was attracted to the sect by the one principle in it which coincided with his own psychological conclusion,—that the feelings of joy and pain are the only tests of practical truth, and should therefore determine our rule of life. Accordingly, his starting-point was, that pleasure is the sum and substance of a blessed life,—*ἡδονὴ ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος τοῦ μακαρίως ζῆν*. His claim to originality,—the merit of his system—rests on the further conclusions which he drew from this premise,—the view of life, so different from that of the Cyrenaics, which he deduced from a principle common to both.

If pleasure is the aim which philosophy should

propose to itself, then, he argued, the higher and purer the pleasure, the more completely that end is attained. All pleasure is good in itself; but we need to distinguish between such as are permanent and such as are transient; between those which are cheaply won, and involve no unhappy consequences, —“Mirth that no repentance draws,” — and those which are purchased at too great a cost. Sensual enjoyment is a pleasure, and so far good. But if a given sensual enjoyment is attended by evil consequences, followed by pain, whether bodily or mental, it ceases to be a means of happiness; it destroys tranquillity of mind; it is a misstep in the way of life, a miscalculation of the supreme good. It follows that strict temperance is an indispensable condition of pleasure in the Epicurean conception of that end. Aristippus had made pleasurable excitement, *κίνησις*, the highest good; Epicurus placed it in the *καταστηματικά ἡδοναί*, the sober enjoyments which spring from moderation of the appetites.

The next step in the development of this idea was to exalt the pleasures of the mind, intellectual and moral satisfactions, above sensual delights; still insisting that bodily sensation is the origin and ground of all our feelings, and that every mental experience of joy or pain must be referred to the body at last.

“Animi voluptates et dolores,” says Cicero’s defender of the system, “nasci fatemur e corporis voluptatibus et doloribus. . . . Quanquam autem et lætitiā nobis voluptas animi, et molestiam dolor afferat, eorum tamen utrumque et ortum esse e corpore et ad corpus referri ; nec ob eam causam non multo majores esse et voluptates et dolores animi quam corporis. Nam corpore nihil nisi præsens et quod adest sentire possumus, animo autem et præterita et futura.”¹

Not momentary enjoyment, but permanent well-being, is the true pleasure, and the end at which philosophy should aim.

Our philosopher furthermore perceived that a virtuous life is not only conducive, but essential, to this end. You cannot live happily, except you live wisely, honorably, justly ; and, conversely, you cannot live wisely, honorably, justly, without living happily, — “non posse jucunde vivi, nisi sapienter, honeste, justeque vivatur, nec sapienter, honeste, justeque nisi jucunde.” Thus by the way of pleasure, seeking that as the supreme good, he arrives at the goal which other systems reach by a different route, and finds in moral rectitude the true solution of his problem. A well-ordered life is the answer required to the question where and how to win the satisfaction which instinct prompts us to seek, and which Nature declares to be the true and only legitimate end of all seeking. A well-ordered life must be, among other things, a

¹ De Finibus, i. 17.

moral life. Such a life is blessedness : and that blessedness is capable of no increase ; duration adds nothing to it. Therefore, on ethical, as well as physical grounds, Epicurus rejected the idea of a future state. A blessed life is sufficient to itself, an end in itself. Win that, and we have nothing more to seek. It is folly to suffer ourselves to be disturbed by the idea of death ; we have nothing to do with death. So long as we are, death is not ; and when death is, we are not.

This is the positive side, and the bright side, of the system. The problem proposed is happiness ; the solution is a well-ordered, temperate, upright life. But the Epicurean principle is not exhausted ; its requirements are not all covered, by this solution. A well-ordered life is happiness only so long as it is free from care and pain. It still remains true that pleasure is the only and supreme good, and that all pain, all solicitude, care, anxiety, whatever mars and interrupts pleasure, is an evil to be avoided,—exemption from it to be purchased at any price. From which it appears that Epicurean virtue, after all, is merely negative, it is not sufficient to itself, it is not an end, but a means to the end of pleasure ; and if a virtuous act is attended with serious inconvenience, with discomfort, with painful effort and sacrifice, the end is not attained. Then virtue is

no longer a means, and ceases to be binding. Be virtuous so far as virtue consists in abstinence from sin, because sin brings suffering. Be virtuous so far as virtue is consistent with ease and freedom from care and trouble, but no farther; else you miss the end for which virtue alone is desirable. By this canon all heroic undertakings, all grave responsibilities, all painful sacrifices are excluded from the Epicurean scheme of life. The virtue to which the system commends us is negative. Its author was too sagacious not to perceive that sensual indulgence would cause his enterprise to split on the very rock he wished to avoid,—the cravings of desire causing uneasiness of body and mind. His aim in life was deliverance from that uneasiness, — the greatest possible ease of body and mind. The way to obtain that was to have as few wants as human nature will allow; to simplify life; to reduce to a minimum all desires that depend on things external for their gratification. Appetite is insatiable; the more we attempt to gratify it, the more imperious it becomes, the more uneasiness it causes. The better way, therefore, is not to attempt to gratify it, but rather to suppress it, to aim at nothing outward, to strive for nothing, to desire nothing. Injure no one; help where you can; be friendly and humane. But do not go abroad for satisfac-

tion; keep yourself aloof from public life and political action.

“In des Herzen’s heilig stille Räume
Musst du fliehen aus des Leben’s Drang.”¹

This is the meaning of the *λάβει βιώσας*, — a cardinal point in Epicurean ethics. Live retired, live to yourself, — a hidden life; avoid care, avoid irritation, avoid excitement, avoid ambition, avoid desire; abstain from politics, abstain from business, abstain from marriage, live single.

“Look thou not on Beauty’s charming;
Sit thou still when kings are arming;
Taste not when the wine-cup glistens;
Speak not when the people listens;
Stop thine ear against the singer;
From the red gold keep thy finger;
Vacant heart and hand and eye; —
Easy live, and quiet die.”

This is the sum of practical wisdom. If pleasure is the only good, then pain of all kinds is evil; and trouble is pain, and care is pain. Therefore abstain from all pursuits, decline all situations from which care and trouble may ensue.

But the avenues of pain are many; we cannot command them all. Do the best that we may to stave off suffering, it will come in the shape of disease, of untoward accident, causing bodily torment. What is to be done in such exigency?

¹ In the bosom’s holy, still seclusion
Thou must hide thee from the busy throng.

Why, then, if pain unavoidable gets holds of us, we are to make light of it, to laugh it off, — a precept which Cicero criticises as ridiculous affectation, surpassing, because of its inconsistency with the ground-maxim of Epicurus, the pretence of the Stoics that pain is no evil. “Neglige, inquit, dolorem. Quis hoc dicit? Idem qui dolorem summum malum.”¹

In another passage of the same treatise he remarks : —

“Epicurus says things which seem intended to provoke our laughter. He affirms in a certain place that if a wise man were burned, if he were put to torture, you think he is going to say he shall bear it, he shall endure it, he shall not succumb. Greatly to be commended, such a sentiment, by Hercules, and worthy of Hercules himself, by whom I have sworn. But this is not enough for our rugged and severe Epicurus. If a wise man is in the bull of Phalaris, he must say : ‘How pleasant this is ! How little I care for it !’ (*Quam suave est hoc ! Quam hoc non curo ! Suave etiam !*) Pleasant indeed ! Is it little to say, It is not bitter ? Even they who deny that pain is evil do not use to say that it is pleasant to be tortured. It is hard, it is difficult, it is hateful, it is against Nature, they say ; and yet it is no evil. He alone who says that pain *is* an evil, and the greatest of all evils, expects his wise man to call it pleasant. (*Hic qui solum hoc malum dicit et omnium malorum extremum, sapientem censet id suave dicturum.*)”²

¹ *Tusculanæ Disputationes*, ii. 19.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 7.

Another remedy against pain, or another aid to patient endurance, proposed by Epicurus, is the consideration that pain long continued cannot be extreme, and if extreme will soon terminate in death; which, taken in connection with Epicurus' denial of divine aid, provokes Plutarch to say:—

“The Epicureans leave themselves nothing to turn to in their adversity, but when they are in distress look only to this one refuge and port, — dissolution and insensibility; just as if in a storm or tempest at sea some one, to hearten the rest, should stand up and say to them · ‘Gentlemen, the ship hath never a pilot in it, nor will Castor or Pollux come to assuage the violence of the beating waves, or to lay the swift career of the winds; yet I can assure you that there is nothing at all to be dreaded in all this, for the vessel will be immediately swallowed up by the sea, or else will soon fall off and be dashed in pieces against the rocks.’ For this is Epicurus’s way of discourse to persons under grievous distempers and excessive pains. Dost thou hope for any good from the gods for thy piety? It is vanity; for the blessed and incorruptible Being is not constrained by either angers or kindnesses. Dost thou fancy something better after this life than what thou hast here? Thou dost but deceive thyself, for what is dissolved hath no sense, and that which has no sense is nothing to us. Ay! but how comes it then, my good friend, that you bid me eat and be merry? Why, by Jove, because he that is in a great storm cannot be far off from a shipwreck, and your extreme dolours will soon land you on death’s strand.”¹

¹ Plutarch’s *Morals* (Old English Version, London, 1694), ii. 215.

Some striking and just sentiments Epicurus deduced from his principle; and some that are striking and not just, but have the merit of an honest consistency; for example: "He has the best enjoyment of riches who is above the need of them." "Poverty conformed to the law of nature is the true riches." "He who desires to be rich will best accomplish that end, not by adding to his stores, but by diminishing his wants." "To the wise man things of little value are as fruitful sources of enjoyment as the most costly." "A past good is better than a present, because it is no longer subject to loss." "Pain is a greater evil than disgrace; disgrace is no evil unless it occasions pain." "In ipso dedecore nihil mali nisi sequantur dolores."¹ "Right and wrong are empty names; wrong-doing is not an evil in itself, but evil only so far as the doer of it is liable to be found out and punished," — *Ἡ ἀδικία οὐ καθ' ἑαυτὴν κακόν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ κατ' ὑποψίαν φόβῳ εἰ μὴ λήσει ὑπὲρ τῶν τοιούτων ἐφεστηκότας κολαστὰς.*² Here the heathen atheist's philosophy coincides with that of a well-known Christian moralist, an archdeacon of the English Church. The only obligation to do right which Paley acknowledges is that derived from the fear of punishment and the hope of reward in a future

¹ Cicero: *Tusculanæ Disputationes*, ii. 12.

² Diogenes Laertius, 151.

state. Between him and our philosopher it is simply a question of time.

The strongest motive recognized by Epicurean ethic, stronger even than the love of pleasure, is the fear of pain: stronger, because the absence of pain is esteemed in that system a positive good. The only use its author could see in government was protection against evil. Accordingly, he preferred monarchy to all other forms of government because it is the strongest. Friendship itself, which holds so high a place in his theory of life, was tainted in his conception with this utilitarian idea of mutual protection.

On the whole, the precepts of Epicurus, though aiming at pleasure, appear on closer inspection, as Seneca remarks, rather sad than gay, — “*si propius accesseris, tristitia; voluptas enim illa ad parvum et exile revocatur.*”¹

The Epicureans, like the Stoics, loved to embody their moral sentiments in the person of an imaginary “wise man,” whom they invested with all the attributes commended by that philosophy.

“The wise man,” they said, “lives, like the gods, a blessed life, lifted above the power of Necessity and above the freaks of Chance. He alone has attained to true freedom; for the service of Philosophy is freedom. He alone is the true friend. He is free from the yoke of supersti-

¹ Seneca: *De beata vita*, c. xiii.

tion and free from the fear of death. He is superior to the pains of the body, for he lives in an element of perpetual calm. His will is subject to his understanding, and his understanding is invulnerable to all painful thoughts and the miserable cares of life; he keeps them at bay by the steady contemplation of blessedness past and to come. He knows moreover that all suffering ends with death, and will not hesitate, when pain becomes intolerable, of his own free-will to quit this life, — non dubitat, si ita melius sit, migrare de vita.”¹

It will be seen from this brief sketch how nearly in some points the Epicurean philosophy coincides with the Stoic. Both systems agreed in their ideal of a self-sufficing freedom of mind, an immovable calmness of soul, an ever-growing indifference to fortune. Both agreed in the contemplation of a blessedness consisting neither in sensual delights nor worldly goods, but in peace of mind. Both insisted on the absolute dominion of reason over sense and passion. In both systems freedom, virtue, and blessedness were inseparably connected. The disciples of both were exhorted to retire from the world and seek refuge in the realms of thought. But, agreeing so far, they differed — how widely! — in the fundamental idea on which they based their requirements. The foundation of the Stoic was fortitude and virtue for virtue's sake; that of the Epicurean was temperance for the sake of enhanced pleasure.

¹ Cicero : *De Finibus*, i. 19.

"The Stoic regarded man as belonging to a higher order, to whose service he was bound, and in serving whom he might become free; the Epicurean, whose atheistic principles gave no assurance of any such order, was left without a hold and without a hope beyond the sensible world."¹

The popular judgment — and in this instance it is a very correct one — of the value of this system is expressed in the very word "Epicurean" as commonly understood. It is true the common understanding does not accurately represent the idea and purpose of its founder; but it does represent the natural and inevitable tendency of that philosophy. The signification which the word has assumed in popular speech is a testimony and a judgment. What is it, then, that is popularly understood by Epicurean? Nothing lofty, you will say, nothing heroic, nothing that commands our respect, but refined self-indulgence, the tasteful, considerate gratification of those desires which have self for their end. When we say "Stoic," we mean something vigorous, manly, noble, sublime; stern it may be, but heroic. When we say "Epicurean," we mean something soft, luxurious, effeminate, timid, otiose. Both systems are Socratic in their origin, — schemes of practical wisdom; both pro-

¹ See Ersch und Gruber, art. Epikouros, to which I am largely indebted.

posed to themselves substantially the same problem. The goal for each was a blessed life, the highest attainable good. The Stoic conceived it as ideal virtue; the Epicurean conceived it as ideal pleasure. The former sought it in defying harm, the latter in escaping harm; the one in the conquest of self, the other in self-indulgence.

As a theory of enjoyment, if that were the sum of a blessed life, the Epicurean philosophy was subtle and wise. In one sense it may be said that men seek enjoyment in every pursuit, the hero and the voluptuary alike; that is, they seek satisfaction. But satisfaction how differently conceived and pursued! What constitutes satisfaction with one is no satisfaction at all to another. The satisfaction of Epicurus consisted in spending tranquil hours of philosophic converse in a garden. The satisfaction of Vitellius consisted in gorging himself with dainties, regardless of expense; the satisfaction of St. Simeon consisted in living on the top of a column too narrow for repose, encountering without shelter all heats and rigors of the sky. The satisfaction of Arnold of Winkelried consisted in making his body a target for Austrian lances; the satisfaction of Arnold of Connecticut consisted in selling his country to the enemy. To say that pleasure is the supreme good is saying nothing until pleasure is defined. To define it in

the Epicurean sense of tranquillity and ease is to limit human nature by the paltriest bounds ; it is to strike from the ranks of the wise the great army of those on whose efforts and sacrifices human well-being mainly depends, to whose efforts it is due that the Epicurean can enjoy that ease which constitutes for him the end of life. Where would the world be at this moment if the Epicurean philosophy had always and everywhere prevailed ; if everywhere men had consulted their own ease, and made enjoyment their only aim ? There must be sacrifice somewhere, and an unepicurean spirit, to keep the world alive.

But setting aside this objection drawn from the consideration of the general good, putting social well-being out of the question, view the matter in relation to the individual only ; say the individual has nothing to do with social ends, that his business is to take care of himself : is this the best that man can attain — a life exempt from care and pain ? Does it satisfy our idea of life and man ? Suppose that exemption attainable, it surely is not the best. There is a satisfaction which life conducted on Epicurean principles can never know, — the satisfaction which springs from success in some great work or noble endeavor, the satisfaction which lies in the consciousness of having accomplished something worthy and good. Kepler

at the close of those labors which determined the laws of the planetary motions; Washington resigning his commission at the close of the war of the Revolution; Clarkson, after twenty years of unceasing effort, witnessing in the House of Lords the passage of the bill for the abolition of the slave-trade, — these and the like of these teach us the use and the meaning of life.

The tree is known by its fruits. Other schools of philosophy, whatever the errors with which they are chargeable, have the merit at least of having sent forth into the world some great and noble characters by whom the world has been instructed and blest. But what, if we except some volumes of poetry, what has the Epicurean produced that has earned or deserves the thanks of mankind? Out of that garden which bore the inscription, “Here pleasure is the supreme good,” nothing better than the love of pleasure could ever proceed, nothing better could it ever attract. “But out of the school of Epicurus,” says Plutarch, “and from among those that follow his doctrine, I will not ask what tyrant-killer has proceeded, nor yet what man valiant and victorious in feats of arms, what lawgiver, what prince, what counsellor, what governor of the people. Neither will I demand who of them has been tormented or died for supporting of right and justice; but who of all

these sages has for the benefit and service of his country undertaken so much as a voyage at sea, gone of an embassy, or expended a sum of money.”¹

So far and no farther could Athenian atheism reach with its precepts. Its purest product was Epicurean wisdom; and in that there was no power to lift a man above himself, nothing of the spirit that overcomes the world, no adequate interpretation, much less satisfaction, of the wants of man. The school of Epicurus is long since extinct, but the Epicurean mind survives; it prevails at this moment as widely perhaps as in any past age. Something of the Garden cleaves to our time. Our very reforms betray it; our philosophies are steeped in it. Carlyle alone, the Cato Censor of the century, is uncorrupted by it. Universal relaxation of discipline, abolition of all pain, retribution ignored, all strengths and austerities ruled out of life; softness in legislation and education, general amnesty of treasons and rascalities in this world, indiscriminate and unconditional bestowal of bliss in the next,—behold the spirit and creed of our day! As a counterpoise to this daintiness and dissoluteness of theory and practice, one is tempted to oppose the bracing rigor of the Porch. The world is no garden, and

.¹ Plutarch against Colotes. Old English Version.

life no lullaby of endless blandishments. The individual, if he means to grow into a consummate spirit, must pass through wars and fightings to inward peace, must struggle up through want and weakness and bitter pain to light and freedom.

“Mortal that standest on a point of time,
With an eternity on either hand,
Thou hast one duty above all sublime,
Where thou art placed, serenely there to stand.
'Tis well in deeds of good, tho' small, to thrive,
'Tis well some part of ill, tho' small, to cure,
'Tis well with onward, upward hope to strive;
Yet better and diviner to endure.”

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER.

MY first example of philosophic atheism was drawn from the schools of ancient wisdom. I have spoken of Epicurus, a founder of one of those schools, a member of the great Socratic movement which survived the edict of Justinian, which passed into Christian history through Arabian *savans*, and spent itself in mediæval scholasticism. My second example shall be a modern, a philosopher of this century, a member of the Kantian movement, a name of note in metaphysic,—Arthur Schopenhauer. I select this German partly as being the only modern atheist who seems to me really profound, and partly because of the points of contrast between him and Epicurus, showing the range of the atheistic mind. The contrast is striking. Epicurus was a flat materialist; Schopenhauer an out-and-out idealist. Epicurus was an optimist; Schopenhauer a pessimist. Epicurus was sunny-tempered, bland, humane; Schopenhauer was a cynic and malcontent. Epicurus gathered his followers around him in a garden, and invited the world to partake of his cheer; Schopenhauer shut himself up in a German *Studierzimmer*, and wreaked with curses on the world his spite at the

world's neglect of his wisdom. Epicurus despised and decried all learning ; Schopenhauer was richly, widely, profoundly learned. Epicurus exhorts us to make the most of life ; Schopenhauer teaches that renunciation of the will to live is the true wisdom. Epicurus lived abstemiously, and taught that pleasure is man's chief end ; Schopenhauer lived daintily, and taught that the end of man is suffering.

Arthur, son of Heinrich Floris and Johanna Henrietta Schopenhauer, was born at Danzig, in East Prussia, an important seaport of the Baltic, on the 22d of February, 1788. He should have been a native of England, to which country his father, an ardent lover of liberty and of English institutions, had repaired with that intent ; but the illness of the mother compelled them to return before the expected birth. It could not be that a Kantian should be born out of Germany. The name Arthur was given him with a view to mercantile life ; it was a name which foreign correspondents would not need to translate, being in all European languages the same. A portion of his boyhood was spent in France, and a portion in England ; whereby the foundation was laid of a thorough acquaintance with the languages of those countries, which, together with Italian, he spoke with fluency in after years. In spite of his earnest remonstrance

and avowed preference for the life of a scholar, the father, himself a merchant, having changed his residence from Danzig to Hamburg, placed him, at the age of seventeen, in a counting-room in that city, and commended him to Senator Genisch for thorough commercial training. But a better fortune, or one more accordant with his wishes, awaited him. The father died. The widowed young mother (much younger than her husband), suddenly discovering in herself a literary vocation, or, at any rate, embracing one which she had not dared to indulge while her husband lived, removed with her daughter Adele to Weimar, then the Athens of Germany, and entered the career of authoress. She wrote and published an interminable series of novels and tales. I suppose they found readers, seeing she persisted to write them. I remember to have seen the backs of the volumes in the circulating libraries, long rows of duodecimos, — “Romane von Johanna Schopenhauer.” I fancy they are not there now. Arthur, still a minor, left behind in Hamburg, solicited and finally obtained permission to study, *studieren*, — what we call going to college. Like a harrier unkenelled, he rushed to books, — Latin, Greek, mathematics. He crammed at Gotha under Döring and Jacobs, afterward at Weimar under Passow; and at the age of twenty-one was matriculated as

student of medicine at Göttingen, then the first university in Germany. His life there was studious, quiet, and somewhat recluse. He is said to have had but two intimate companions, — one was the late Baron Bunsen; the other you would not easily guess: it was Mr. William B. Astor, of New York, the long-surviving leaf of this strange trefoil. He afterward studied at Berlin, where he heard, among other celebrities, Fichte, who somewhat disappointed his eager longing. His doctor's degree — not doctor of medicine, but doctor of philosophy — he sought and obtained at Jena. His thesis on this occasion, — his first philosophical work, — was entitled: “Ueber die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichendem Grunde” (“Concerning the Fourfold Root of the Proposition of the Sufficient Cause”). The sufficient cause is that whereby anything must rather be than not be; according to the formula, “Nihil est sine ratione cur potius sit quam non sit.” This proposition, according to Schopenhauer, has four roots, — causality, reason, intuition, will. With the pride of a young author in his first publication, Schopenhauer handed a copy to his mother. She, with the insight of the librarian who assigned a treatise on Hebrew roots to the department of botany, looking at the title, was struck with the word *Wurzel*. She could make nothing of it but that it was some kind of

root. "Root!" she said; "that is something for the apothecaries." It was not a very flattering welcome to a young writer just entering his philosophical career. But he consoled himself with thinking that his root would flourish when not a novel of hers should be extant.

The Hofrätthin Schopenhauer gave weekly receptions to the *litterati* of Weimar, by means of which Arthur made the acquaintance of Goethe, from whom he received, as he confessed, his second education, although the difference in their ages was nearly forty years. Goethe at this time was smarting with the cold reception given to his *Farbenlehre*, — his theory of colors, — based, in opposition to Newton, on the assumed homogeneity of light. Schopenhauer was induced to study optics under Goethe's guidance, for the sake of a common interest. He adopted the conclusions of his master respecting the genesis of the so-called physical colors, but maintained at the same time, with due independence, that the *Farbenlehre* was not a complete optical theory; that should be physiological.

In 1814 he removed to Dresden, where he made the acquaintance, among other men of note, with Tieck, the head of the romantic school, and where he composed his chief work, "The World as Will and Presentment." As soon as the manuscript was placed in the hands of the publisher, he started

on a tour of recreation in Italy, and visited the memorable places in that country, which his knowledge of the language and his general culture enabled him to enjoy as none ever can without those advantages. This was the brightest page in his history; through life he recurred to it with fond recollection, and softened whenever he spoke of his Italian tour. The news of the failure of the mercantile house at Danzig in which his mother had invested the greater part of her own and her daughter's property, recalled him to Germany. With characteristic caution, mistrusting his mother's management, he had previously separated his portion of the estate and made his own investments. He was therefore only so far a loser by this failure as his hereditary prospects were concerned. Nevertheless he judged it expedient to look about for some additional means of maintenance; for though his patrimony, so long as he enjoyed it without matrimony, sufficed for that end, some unforeseen accident might deprive him of his income. The only occupation which seemed consistent with his training was that of a university professor, if such a post could be secured. With the hope of promotion to the chair just vacated by the death of Solger, he obtained the *venia docendi* in Berlin, and began lecturing on philosophy. But the *venia docendi* is accompanied by no salary; it

yields no remuneration beyond the fees required of students who may choose to attend the lectures. The students did not come in numbers sufficient to make the thing profitable. Hegel had the field and the prestige. Who cared to hear philosophy in Berlin from any but Hegel? The chair of Solger was filled by another. Schopenhauer had no following. He went to Italy once more; then returned to Berlin, and tried lecturing again, with no better success. It was a bitter disappointment, and poisoned all his future. Under the cold stone of that defeat he got "sweltering venom" enough to last him a lifetime. Meanwhile his great work, his "*Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*," had proved a dead failure; it was so much waste paper (*maculatur*) on the booksellers' hands. In Germany it seems to be taken for granted that none but a university professor can write books of philosophy or science worthy of notice. The learned world, the university world, exists, or did then exist, apart from the general public. Only what that world produced of a scientific kind it honored; outside was the Galilee from which ariseth no prophet. The charge which Schopenhauer urges of conscious, wilful, concerted suppression of his name is pure absurdity. The neglect is sufficiently explained by preoccupation. The philosophic interest of the time was monopolized, absorbed, by Hegel; and though

Hegel himself had insisted that philosophy is not any one system, but all systems, his German contemporaries and the next generation were somehow made to believe that with him the books were closed, the canon complete, the last word spoken. There were some exceptions; the work was not absolutely without any recognition. Herbart, one of the *dii majores* of philosophy, acknowledged its distinguished ability; and Jean Paul, one of the Olympians of literature, praised its profundity, though gloomy as the Norway pool on whose dark depths no sun ever smiles. But on the whole the book was for the time a failure. The hope of his life seemed quenched in oblivion. His heart was shrivelled by the blow. Not only the academic, but the literary career had failed. Still he lingered in Berlin, nursing his wrath, irresolute, until one day, the cholera entering the city at one gate, he made his escape through another, and never rested till he reached Frankfort on the Maine, where he established himself as misanthrope for the remainder of his life, and where he died on the 22d of September, 1860.

One would think that a man just entering on the forties, with an independent fortune, sound health, a well-stored mind, extraordinary intellectual powers, and no cares, might manage to lead a happy and useful life. Seldom in the turns and

combinations of fortune has any one chanced on so fair a lot. But in human life the spirit and the lot are seldom well matched ; or rather, they are so matched that the chance of happiness is equal for all. The literary career was *not* closed, though he chose to think so. His first attempt had failed ; so has that of many a man who came to be famous at last. He had but to try again and again. Luck may rule the hour, but merit wins the final crown ; intellectual overweight tells in the end. A hearing once obtained, his forgotten first work would be fished out of the dust-heap and receive its dues. But Schopenhauer had not the *morale* for this ; his *morale* was defective at the root. He had neither industry, nor courage, nor faith, nor patience ; nothing wherewith to right himself after that first defeat. It was a clear case of a man of exceptional intellect failing from moral defect ; not, as often happens, from the bondage of appetite, but from want of heart. Emerson says our success is through the affections. Schopenhauer was a signal illustration of the truth of that remark. There was a root of bitterness in him which poisoned all the springs of life. He sulked like a child in a pet. If men would not read, he would not write ; and for twenty years he wrote nothing. Twenty unproductive years incorporated in the body of his life ! It must not be supposed

that all this while he lived a recluse. He made the most of the good things of this world. He had comfortable lodgings, dined every day at the *table d'hôte* of the Hôtel d'Angleterre, where they have his portrait still hanging, and he carefully nursed his estate.

He had inculcated as a cardinal point of practical philosophy the "abnegation of the will to live;" but never did mortal cling to life with more desperate tenacity. He had what Lamb calls "an intolerable disinclination to dying." He lived in a state of perpetual alarm. Fear of small-pox drove him from Naples; fear of the cholera drove him from Berlin. In Verona he was haunted by the fear that he had taken poisoned snuff. He never went to bed without dagger and pistol by his side, and started at every unusual noise. He took extraordinary precautions against infection, hiding the mouthpiece of his pipe during his absence from his chambers, and would never trust himself to the hands of a barber. Fear of robbery impelled him to label as medicines the parcels containing his valuables, or to label them in foreign tongues. Hints in his will were written in Latin, his expense-book was kept in English, and his coupons stowed away in the envelopes of letters.

Though he would not write for the public, it was impossible for a man so cultured and endowed to

abstain from books. He read and studied, accumulated a large library, and filled many notebooks with memoranda and wise remarks.

His discourse could be brilliant when he found an appreciative ear. Foucher de Careil, a sufficient judge, celebrates his rare conversational powers. The guests at the *table d'hôte* lingered over their dessert, enchained by the eloquence with which he dispensed the rich stores of his knowledge. But sometimes other topics got the floor; army officers and young gallants would have it their own way. Then he would lay down a gold piece by the side of his plate: the poor should have it if the gentlemen opposite would start some other topic besides women and horses.

His character, as sketched by his friend Dr. Gwinner, is not altogether lovely. A rough cynicism seems to have been its prevailing trait. It is a relief to know that he gave liberally in the way of alms, although so careful a manager of his funds. An ingrained, incorruptible honesty must be conceded to him. He was not likely under ordinary temptation to commit a base or bad act; nor had he any vices in the common acceptation of the term. But wrath and bitterness and evil-speaking were the settled habit of his life. A misanthrope by profession, he pretended to distinguish between *μισάνθρωπος* and *καταφρονάν-*

θρῶπος, man-hater and man-despiser, disclaiming for himself the former, but freely avowing the latter, — which it seems to me is the greater sin of the two. Man-despiser he professed to be. We cannot hate, he said, what we altogether despise. He even blamed himself for want of thoroughness in that particular. He had never been able, he said, to maintain an adequate idea of the baseness of human nature.

He did not wish to be loved by his fellow-men, for in order to be loved by them one must be like them; which God forbid! What had he in common with them? When the cat is a kitten, she plays with little paper-balls; she imagines that they are alive, and like herself. When she is old, she knows better, and lets them lie. Such had been his experience with the bipeds. He was a woman-hater, and gloried in his celibacy. The so-called “career” of most young men, he said, ends in their becoming beasts of burden to a woman. The married man bears the full burden of life, the unmarried but half. All genuine philosophers had been celibate, — Descartes, Leibniz, Malebranche, Spinoza, Kant. The ancients are not to be taken into the account, because women with them occupied a subordinate position. Moreover, Socrates’ matrimonial experience did not recommend the nuptial state to scholars. He quotes Petrarch: “*Quisquis*

requiem quæris, feminam cave, perpetuam officinam litium ac laborum."

To contempt of humankind he added an immense conceit of his own philosophic importance. He did not hesitate to declare himself the foremost philosopher of his time. Indeed he seems to have regarded himself as surpassing in acumen the philosophers of all time. "I have lifted farther than any mortal before me," he said, "the veil of truth; but I would like to see the man who can boast of having had a more wretched set of contemporaries than I," — meaning Schelling and Hegel, and the philosophic and learned world of his day. Kant he professed to hold in high esteem; but all subsequent philosophers he treated with unmeasured contempt. I have alluded to his charge of a conspiracy to shut him out from public notice. He actually believed that the university philosophers were afraid of him, — were afraid that if he came to be known they would fall at once into hopeless neglect, and therefore had combined to suppress him! And how he chuckles at their defeat when, in his latter years, he began to emerge a little from his long obscurity! "Their Caspar Hauser," he says, "has escaped, in spite of their machinations." "I am read, and shall continue to be read; *legor et legar*."

His admirer and sycophant, Frauenstädt, has

filled many pages with Schopenhauer's abuse of the post-Kantian philosophers, — an interesting study for those who are curious in the rhetoric of vituperation.

“In the period which intervenes between Kant and myself, there is no philosophy, nothing but university charlatanism. . . . Fichte made one great discovery, — that of the *niaiserie* of the Germans, in virtue of which, when any one boldly babbles sheer nonsense, for fear of compromising their intellectual credit they set it down, as unfathomable profundity ; whereby a philosophic reputation is soon acquired, which, once established, lasts until some thinker revises the acts. After Fichte, Schelling improved the discovery with great personal advantage. But it was reserved for Hegel to carry it to its full extent. He made such thorough use of it that nothing remains for any who come after. . . . To mystify men you have only to say something of which all they know is that they don't understand it. Then the Germans especially, who are good-natured and honest, immediately take it for granted that the fault is in their own understanding, in which secretly they have no great confidence ; and their surest way to conceal the shame of not understanding is to join loudly in the praise of the unintelligible wisdom, whereby its authority becomes more and more imposing.”

Fichte and Schelling he regards as sufficiently contemptible ; but the special and chief mark of his polemic is Hegel, whom he cannot name without malediction. He finds a fit motto for Hegelian philosophy in “Cymbeline :” “Such stuff as madmen

— tongue and brain not.” He sees but one use which that philosophy can possibly serve. Guardians sometimes find their wards too intelligent for their purposes. Let the inconveniently bright youths be made to study Hegel; they will soon be reduced to any required degree of stupidity.

The accusation of charlatanism which Schopenhauer urges against Hegel, it must be confessed, is not wholly groundless. He substantiates the charge by citing passages from the “Encyclopædie;” here is one of them:—

“Essential being (*das Wesen*), as being that mediates itself with itself by the negativity of itself, is relation to itself only as it is relation to another; that is, immediate only as something posited and mediated.”

And again:—

“Essential being (*das Wesen*) is pure identity and appearance in itself only as it is negativity relating itself to itself; consequently repulsion of itself from itself. It therefore contains essentially the determination of difference.”

Nothing which Schopenhauer has said in reprobation of such stuff is too severe.

“The impudent recklessness of this charlatanism, the real *improbitas* of such doing, consists,” he says, “in putting together words which present impossible operations of the intellect, contradictions and absurdities of every kind, whereby the reader’s mind is tortured in the same way

that the body would be if forced to assume positions entirely contrary to its articulations. On the whole, Hegel's philosophy contains three parts of bare nonsense, and one part of corrupt notions. Nothing in it is plain but its purpose, which is to gain the favor of princes by servility and orthodoxy. The plainness of its purpose contrasts in a piquant way the obscurity of the presentation ; and, like Harlequin-out-of-the-egg, there develops itself at the end of a whole volume of bombastic gallimathias, the precious petticoat-philosophy which they teach scholars of the fourth form ; namely, God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the truth of the Evangelical confession, the error of the Catholic," etc.

Whatever the rights of Schopenhauer's polemic against the post-Kantians, it is not to be denied that wrath and hate were its motive-spring. It was only a part of his controversy with the world in general, or so much of it, at least, as he could not subject to or range on his side.

Such was the moral of the man. The wonder is that with such a moral, with a nature so devoid of all nobleness and sweetness, of fortitude and strength, there should have been combined an intellect so robust and fine ; that such a brain should have coupled with such a heart. The fact goes far to prove his own favorite theory of the purely physical origin and ground of mental action, and the total disconnection between the intellectual and moral realms.

As a metaphysical writer Germany has not his

equal, and no nation, I think, his superior. . Lessing wrote no purer or more idiomatic German ; Hume no more translucent English. Like Leibniz and Spinoza and Berkeley, he has shown that the deepest themes which can occupy the mind may be handled in a lucid and readable style. The contrast with the other Kantians, and especially with Hegel, is crying. Menzel asks : “ Who, on reading a work of Hegel, can suppose that any nation would acknowledge his language for its own ? ” Hegel himself prefixes as motto to his works a line from Sophocles to the effect that Truth is the strength of discourse, — *Τᾷ ἀληθείᾳ ἀεὶ πλείστον ἰσχύει λόγος*. But truth and discourse in a philosophic treatise are inseparably connected ; and when the discourse is involved, perplexed, and unintelligible, one cannot help feeling that what is attempted to be expressed is not clear to the mind of the writer. Hegel rejoices in abstractions, entangles himself with them, befogs himself, loses his way in them, — or causes, at least, his hearers to lose theirs. He mystifies them, — sometimes, I must think, wantonly. Abstraction, we all know, is a necessary operation in metaphysic ; but abstraction may be wilfully pursued beyond the point of true perception, beyond the bounds of consciousness ; and then it becomes a play of words. Hegel’s abstractionism is the principle of infinite divisibility applied

to thought. The chemist in his analysis is brought to a stand by fixed bounds. He comes upon finalities, whether given in his material or in the limited capacity of his instruments. But there is no finality in speculation; there, the analytic process — the process of abstraction — may be continued *ad libitum*. The university professor has so many lectures to give: the further he pushes his analysis, the longer the material will hold out. Hence perhaps the ductility of certain systems given in the form of lectures. Hegel seems to have known no limit to his abstractionism but that of practical necessity, — the kind of necessity we express by the saying, “one must draw the line somewhere.” In saying this I am by no means insensible to the real value of Hegel’s works. No doubt he was one of the most acute of modern thinkers. In his attempt to apprehend the absolute and construct the universe *à priori*, he failed, indeed, as they all did; but the noble thoughts, the luminous intuitions with which he has enriched so many fields of investigation, establish beyond reasonable question his rank among the magnates of speculative philosophy. But as a writer he is very unsatisfactory, not to say repulsive; and, here and there, liable, as I said before, to the charge of charlatanism, — of a word-juggle which promises to the eye or the ear a meaning impossible to appropriate with the

understanding ; as in the instances I have cited from the "Encyclopädie." From this vice of infinitesimal analysis, of hair-splitting abstruseness, of nihilistic refinement ; from this compelling of language to perform impossible feats, — Schopenhauer is entirely free. With a clearly defined, intelligible, presentable thought, and a crystalline, colorless, and yet singularly vivid and commanding style, he approaches the great problem which has occupied the *dii majores* of philosophy in all time, — the problem of ontology, the mystery of being, the origin and ground of the universe of things.

Here am I, and there, confronting me, is the world in its manifoldness. This is a fact of universal consciousness. No need to go back of that for a starting-point. I am conscious of myself and a world external to myself. Philosophy busies itself with this fact. We soon come to see that what we call the world is simply our own impression of it, or, — using the word in its popular sense — our idea. Hence the title of Schopenhauer's principal work, "The World as Will and Idea." The German word is *Vorstellung*, which means literally "representation," — that which is represented to me, or which I represent to myself. We might say, "The world as willed and represented," or "The world as willed and as it appears ;" but "Idea" is sufficiently exact, and a less awkward rendering.

SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY.

WE have the idea of a world external to ourselves, which we suppose in all its phenomena and forms to correspond with our conception. Whence have we that idea? Primarily and apparently through the senses. We see, we hear, we smell, we feel, the objects that compose the world of our experience; but if we diligently consider and analyze all that the senses actually and ultimately furnish of this experience, we find that it falls far short of our idea of external things. What, for example, do we get through the eye? Neither form nor distance, but only color and different degrees of light and shade. What do we get by touch? Differences of temperature, different degrees of resistance, a different pressure on the tactual nerves. All that the senses give us is certain affections of our nervous system. But these do not constitute the world of things as it lies in our experience; they do not account for that experience. Clearly, another supplementary agent is required for that purpose; that agent is the intellect. We have a brain, weighing on the average about three pounds. It is the action of that brain, it is the intellect, that gives us the world of our idea. The eye sees objects inverted; the intellect

sets them upright. The eye sees objects equally near ; the intellect places them in right perspective. The eye sees objects double ; the intellect construes one from the two. The experience of every blind-born whose eyes have been successfully couched confirms this statement. But the new-born infant, whose eyes are sound, arrives at its perceptions in the same way. Infants at first see only color and different degrees of light and shade. They have to experiment a long while, to turn the objects about and about, to view them in different lights, to call in the aid of touch, to reason from one aspect to another, from one sensation to another, before they can see aright, and distinguish the distant from the near, the single object from the medley of objects presented to the eye. That the intellect in all this business acts unconsciously, does not alter the fact ; it is the intellect, nevertheless, that does the work. The understanding is the architect that builds the sensible world of our experience ; the senses but furnish the raw material to this great artist.

And this is true of brutes as well as man. In the lower orders of the brute creation the action of the intellect is of course less perfect, and the world which they perceive corresponds with their limitation ; it is not our world. They may not even have a brain in the proper sense of that term.

Mere separate ganglia, little knots of nerves, may answer their need. Still, in the very lowest stages of animal nature it is mental action that does the work. It is this "that mediates for the dull worm the existence of its formless and soundless world."

"With more developed brain and organs of sense, the world becomes more manifold, richer in objects, until it reaches its perfect idea in man. But always it is the same agency, the understanding, that informs the worm, that prompts the infant to reach after the moon, and that reveals to Leverrier the existence of an unseen planet. In these instances the agency differs only in degree. To the imperfectly organized animal it shows only the creature's own relation to the world of its perception. In man it appears as the effort to combine the thousandfold variety of objects and impressions in one chain of cause and effect. By means of the same function which acts in the worm, man, ascending from effect to cause, creates his mechanics, his astronomy, physics, chemistry, physiology. By means of the same he learns to view as a whole the life of humanity, in which causes become motives, and so deduces from chronicles pragmatic history. Or, proceeding in the opposite direction, from causes to effects, he invents machines, and on thrones or in cabinets, by commercial speculation or from the orator's rostrum, rules his kind."¹

It is the merit of Schopenhauer, building as he did on Kant, to have greatly simplified the method

¹ Weigelt: *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, p. 125.

by which that philosopher constructs our idea of the phenomenal world. In fact, he reduces Kant's twelve categories — the three respectively of quantity, quality, relation, and modality — to the single law of causality, which he identifies with the understanding itself. This law is the necessary condition of right perception of the universe; therefore it cannot have come to us from without, it must pre-exist in us prior to all consciousness, underlying all; as, according to Kant, those forms of perception which we call Time and Space must be antecedent to all experience, inasmuch as they are the conditions of all experience.

The world of our experience then, the sensible world, *Die Welt als Vorstellung*, is the product of the understanding. That which we rightly perceive or infer is the real. It is folly to ask what things may be in themselves, independently of our perception. Independently of us they are nothing, they exist not. Their relation to us, their action on us, is their reality. What they are for us, that they are.

As the senses are supplemented by the understanding, that in turn is supplemented by another faculty called reason, — the organ of abstract ideas, in German *Begriffe*; literally, comprehensions, conceptions, concepts, because they take together, or embrace, several particulars in one.

The understanding deals with actual existences, reason with abstractions — what the schoolmen termed “universals.” It classifies given existences, seizes the characteristics common to each kind, dropping what is merely individual, and thus obtains general or abstract ideas; for example, the understanding knows only actual horses, dogs, men; reason gives us the idea of a dog in general, a horse, a man. These abstractions are embodied in words. It is reason that makes language, for language consists of abstractions. All words, excepting proper names, express abstractions. It is true we distinguish in language between abstract and concrete terms. Words expressive of qualities we call abstract; words expressive of things we call concrete. Fleetness, we say, is abstract; horse and bird are concrete. Brightness is abstract; a star or a candle is concrete. But the difference in reality is only a difference in degree. It is only that the process of abstraction has been carried farther in the one case than in the other. Brightness is abstract compared with star; but star is abstract compared with Sirius or Gamma Lyrae. Fidelity is abstract compared with dog; but dog is abstract compared with Pug or Tray. All language, as consisting of abstractions, is the product of reason; for only reason abstracts. The understanding, which furnishes only intuitions,

and knows only particulars, could never create speech. Reason is that which distinguishes man from brute. By means of that faculty, through the instrumentality of language, we have science, art, laws, the state, all plans and enterprises in which men combine for common ends. All these — all intelligent action whereby humanity differs from brute nature is founded on abstractions and mediated by language.

But Schopenhauer denies to reason all intuitive power. Herein he differs from Jacobi, who ascribed to pure reason a function which Kant had relegated to the practical; namely, intuitive perception of supersensible truths. He (Jacobi) is the real author of that distinction and characterization respectively of reason and understanding, — the one the intuitive, the other the discursive faculty — which now so widely prevails. Schopenhauer repudiated all this. The understanding, according to him, is the intuitive faculty; but its intuitions are sensible objects. Reason knows only abstractions; but those abstractions must be based on sensible experience, they must be referrible to actual, known existences at last; otherwise they have no validity: as the notes of a bank have no validity without specie in its vaults. He denies to reason any function beyond the sphere of sensible experience, and so consigns the idea of

God, of a spiritual world, and all kindred ideas, to the limbo of chimæras and unrealities. They are inventions or illusions which philosophy knows not, with which philosophy has nothing to do.

These three, then,—sense, understanding, reason,—constitute the world of my perception, of my sensible experience,—*die Welt als Vorstellung*. The world is my *Vorstellung*; is it anything more? If not, then where is the difference between our waking experience and our dreams? To the dreamer his dreams are as real as is to the waking his waking experience. To the madman his fancies are as true as their perceptions are to the sane. Is there really no difference between them beyond the singularity in the one case and the general agreement in the other? Is the world at large but a phantasmagory agreed on? Has it no objective existence or ground? The contrary is not to be demonstrated if any one shall persist in denying it; but by common consent such denial is esteemed insanity. A universal, irresistible persuasion establishes for all sound minds the fact of an external cause of our subjective experience—of our perceptions. The only rational question in this matter concerns not the fact, but the nature of that cause, the ground of my *Vorstellung*. Schopenhauer finds this ground of all existence to be the all-present Will. That is what

underlies our perceptions and all our experience, — the sole objective reality. The process by which he arrives at this conclusion it is unnecessary here to trace. Its principal moment is the coincidence of will and perception in our own experience. I will to raise my hand, I perceive my hand to rise. Perception and will in this case are identified in my consciousness. They are different constituents of one subject, one Ego. Applying the experience in the case of one *Vorstellung* to all other *Vorstellungen*, he concludes that every perception, every perceived existence, has its ground in will, — it is simply will made manifest. The same will which, with *conscious* volition, causes my arm to rise, or, more precisely, gives me the perception of the raised arm, — that same will, acting *unconsciously*, made my arm, which I perceive, made my body, which I perceive, made the entire world of my perception.

The correctness of this inference, by which the motive power consciously exerted in the voluntary movements of one's own body is extended to all perceived movements and appearances external to one's self, is questionable. I cannot see that the identity of agency assumed by Schopenhauer — the identity of my conscious volition with the *vis formativa* in Nature — is logically established by his reasoning. If the act of volition by which I raise

my arm is a phase and a function of the same will which made the arm, and that will identical with the universal will, ought not my volition to operate beyond the limits of my body by virtue of that identity? I am confined to my easy chair by gout; I see a volume on my shelves which I wish to consult: ought I not, on Schopenhauer's theory, to be able to make for the nonce an arm sufficiently long to reach it, or in some way to compel it within my grasp? Schopenhauer's assumption is pure assumption, not demonstration; and it fails to explain the limitations and conflict of will in our experience. But grant the correctness of the theory, which certainly has the merit of simplicity, and we have the other factor indicated in the title of Schopenhauer's work,—the will. The world is primarily my perception, my idea; on reflection, inquiring the origin and ground of that perception, I find it to be also will.

In his representation of the nature and action of this will, our philosopher exhibits what is most peculiar, most original, most piquant in his system. We are accustomed to think of the action of the will as accompanied in all cases by conscious purpose, by contemplation of the object willed. Schopenhauer, on the contrary, maintains that the will, of which the universe is the product, is a blind, unconscious force, acting with no idea

of any end to be obtained, and no perception (except as human individuals perceive it) of the end accomplished. Without prevision, without a purpose, the headlong omnipotence works and weaves, makes suns and planets, makes rocks and trees, makes tigers and snakes and birds and fishes, and at last makes man; and then for the first time, by means of the human brain, becomes aware of its action. It is not intelligence that directs the will, but the will that makes intelligence. It is something that supervenes, — an *ex post facto* product. The lower orders of creation require and receive but a minimum of this commodity. The world of their perception is merely the supply of some particular kind of nutriment. So much of it only they see and know. With the multiplied and advanced requirements of the higher orders comes increase of intelligence. When Nature, or the Universal Will, requires in any of its creatures the aid of intelligence to satisfy the wants of that creature, it makes a brain proportioned to those wants; in man, who has intellectual wants as well as physical, it develops a brain susceptible of ideas. There was no idea, no reflective intelligence, no perception of the universe in the power that produced it, until man arrived. With the birth of man, the blind, unconscious worker received his sight, and, like a som-

nambulist aroused to consciousness, surveyed with astonishment the deeds performed in sleep, and seemed to see an intelligent purpose where in truth there had been none.

Our philosopher compares the relation between will and intelligence to a strong blind man who bears a seeing one on his shoulders. Absence of consciousness does not prove absence of will. A necessary movement is still a voluntary one. Spinoza had said that a stone impelled by mechanical force, if conscious, would seem to move by its own volition; Schopenhauer adds that the stone would be right in so thinking. A striking illustration of unconscious creation he finds in an Indian myth from the "Mahabharata." Brahma created Tillotama the most beautiful of women, and presented her in turn to all the Gods. Siva's desire to behold her was so great that four faces were successively developed in him as she made the tour of the assembly; Indra's longing was so intense that his body became all eyes.

Creation, as we apprehend it, creation in the view of theism, is thought made manifest; according to Schopenhauer it is will without thought. We are to conceive of it as an infinity of blind impulses which realize themselves in concrete forms,—unconscious will everywhere struggling into being. Will wanted to blaze and shine, and

it burst into suns. It wanted to realize the light and heat of those suns, and it became planets revolving around them. It wanted to vegetate, and it made trees. It wanted to hang from the branches of those trees and to feed upon their leaves, and it made the sloth. It wanted to burrow in the ground, and it made the mole. It wanted to wallow in the mud, and it made the crocodile. It wanted to fly, and it made the bird. Among other things, it wanted to know, and it made man. It wanted to know more, and it made Plato and Aristotle and Kant. It wanted to mystify the vulgar, and it made Hegel. Finally, it wanted to see itself, to understand thoroughly its own essence and working, and it became SCHOPENHAUER. Then it saw all the works that it had made, and — Schopenhauer being a pessimist — behold, it was very bad !

Such is substantially the story which the universe tells of itself in the reading of this prince of atheists. Apart from its atheism, there is something fascinating in his view of the will in Nature. Taken out of its atheistic connection, which is not essential, regarding it not as the whole and final account of being, but as principle of life in the phenomenal world, it is a very opportune corrective of that carpenter view of creation which, under the name of the Argument from Design, has been made so offensive by theologians of the Paley

and Bridgewater school. A deeper theology has felt the inadequacy of the carpenter view, and on grounds of pure theism has propounded something akin to Schopenhauer's unconscious will. Cudworth's Plastic Nature is nearly the same agency, but conceived as motived and controlled by a supreme mind, and not as itself supreme.

"It seems not so agreeable to reason," says Cudworth, "that Nature, as a distinct thing from the Deity, should be quite superseded or made to signify nothing, God himself doing all things immediately and miraculously; from whence it would follow also that they are all done either forcibly and violently, or else artificially only, and none of them by any inward principle of their own.

"This opinion is further confuted by that slow and gradual process that is in the generation of things, which would seem to be but a vain and idle pomp or a trifling formality if the agent were omnipotent; as also by those *ἁμαρτήματα*, as Aristotle calls them, those errors and bumbles which are committed where the matter is inept and contumacious; which argue the agent not to be irresistible, and that Nature is such a thing as is not altogether incapable (as well as human art) of being sometimes frustrated and disappointed by the indisposition of matter. Whereas an omnipotent agent, as it could despatch its work in a moment, so it would always do it infallibly and irresistibly, no ineptitude and stubbornness of matter being ever able to hinder such a one, or make him bungle or fumble in anything.

"Wherefore, since neither all things are produced gratuitously, or by the unguided mechanism of matter, nor

God himself may be reasonably thought to do all things immediately and miraculously, it may well be concluded that there is a Plastic Nature under him, which, as an inferior and subordinate instrument, doth drudgingly execute that part of his providence which consists in the regular and orderly motion of matter ; yet so as that there is also besides this a higher providence to be acknowledged, which, presiding over it, doth often supply the defects of it, and sometimes overrule it, forasmuch as this Plastic Nature cannot act electively nor with discretion.”¹

A philosopher must speak for himself, must be heard in his own cause, to be fairly judged. Here is what Schopenhauer says in the nineteenth chapter of the second book, on the “Primacy of the Will in Self-consciousness :” —

“The will, as *Ding an sich* [ultimate reality], constitutes the inner, real, and indestructible being of man ; but in itself it is unconscious. For consciousness depends on intellect, and intellect is a mere accident of our being. It is a function of the brain ; and that, together with the nerves and spinal marrow attached to it, is merely a fruit, a product, of the rest of the organism, — in fact, a parasite of that organism ; inasmuch as it does not enter actively into its innermost mechanism, but serves the ends of self-preservation only, by regulating its relations to the external world. The organism itself, on the contrary, is the visibility, the objectivity of the individual will. It is the image of the will as it represents itself in the afore-said brain, and therefore conditioned by certain forms of

¹ Cudworth : Intellectual System, book i. chap. 3.

cognition, — time, space, and causality. Accordingly, it represents itself as something extended, acting by succession and material; *i. e.*, effectively working. . . . We may say, therefore, that the intellect is the secondary, the organism the primary, — *i. e.*, the immediate, — manifestation of the will. The will is metaphysical; the intellect physical. The intellect, like its objects, is merely phenomenal; the will alone is *Ding an sich*. In a more symbolic sense, speaking in similes, will is the substance in man, intellect the accident; will the matter, intellect the form; will heat, intellect light."

From the chapter on "The Objectivation of the Will in Irrational Nature," book ii. chap. 3: —

"In respect of the life of plants, I call attention first of all to the remarkable first two chapters of Aristotle's Treatise on Plants. The most interesting thing in them, as is often the case with Aristotle, is his citation of opinions of earlier and more profound philosophers. Here we find that Anaxagoras and Empedocles taught truly that plants derive the movement of their growth from an indwelling desire, *ἐπιθυμία*; and that they even ascribed to them joy and pain, — consequently sensation. Plato saw in them only desire; and that on account of the strong alimentary propensity manifested by them. Aristotle, on the contrary, true to his usual method, gliding on the surface of things and holding by isolated marks and ideas fixed by conventional phrases, maintains that there can be no desire without sensation; and this is impossible to plants. But his confused way of talking shows his embarrassment in relation to this matter, until, where ideas are wanting, at the right moment a word occurs to him, *τὸ θρεπτικόν*, — a

faculty of nutriment. This, he says, plants have, in virtue of the so-called soul, according to his favorite division of vegetative, sensitive, and intellective soul. But that is a mere scholastic quiddity, — as much as to say plants are nourished because they have a faculty of nutrition! A poor substitute for the deeper investigations of the predecessors whom he criticises! Here, too, in the second chapter, we find that Empedocles had even recognized the sexuality of plants, — which Aristotle again carps at, hiding his ignorance of facts behind general principles: as that plants cannot have both sexes in one, otherwise they would be more perfect than animals. Analogous with this was his rejection of the true astronomical system of the Pythagoreans. By his absurd *principia*, in his books on the heavens, he promoted the prevalence of the Ptolemaic system, — whereby humanity was deprived of a truth of the highest importance for two thousand years."

He quotes Treviranus on "The Phenomena and Laws of Organic Life: " —

"A form of life may be conceived in which the action of the outer on the inner occasions only feelings of pleasure and displeasure, and, in consequence of these, desire. Such is the life of plants."

He then proceeds to say: —

"In fact, that will may exist without cognition is visibly, I might say palpably, evident in the life of plants. For here we see a decided effort determined by wants variously modified, and adapting itself to different circumstances, but obviously without cognition.

"Now although we find the recognition of desire, — *i. e.*,

of will, — as the basis of plant-life expressed with greater or less clearness of conception in all ages, the reference of the powers of inorganic nature to the same basis is less frequent as the distance between these and our own being increases. Indeed the boundary-line between the organic and the inorganic is the sharpest-drawn in all Nature, and perhaps the only one which admits of no transition; so that the saying, *Natura non facit saltus*, seems here to find an exception. For though many crystallizations exhibit forms which resemble vegetation, there is yet a fundamental difference between even the slightest tissue, the lowest mould, and all inorganic matter. In inorganic bodies the essential and permanent — that which constitutes their identity and integrity — is the stuff, the material: the unessential, changeable, is the form. With organized bodies it is precisely the reverse: their life consists in constant change of stuff with permanence of form; their essence and identity, therefore, consists, in form.

“On the other hand, it is an essential point of my doctrine that the manifestation of will is no more dependent on life and organization than it is on perception; consequently, that the inorganic has also will; that all its not otherwise explained, essential properties are expressions of that will. . . . In the shooting of a crystal we see, as it were, a setting towards, an attempt at, life, to which, however, it does not attain because the fluid in which the crystal, like all initial life, consists at the commencement of that process is not, like that which is destined for life, enclosed in a skin, and has no vessels in which that movement can propagate itself, nor anything that separates it from the outer world; consequently, the momentary movement is arrested by rigidity, and only a trace of it remains in the crystal.”

In the work entitled "Will in Nature," supplementary to his larger treatise, he cites a vast number of examples illustrative of the action of the will in the animal, vegetable, and even the inorganic world. I give one or two under each of these heads :—

"Besides the organs and weapons, offensive and defensive, in every animal, the will has also armed itself with an intellect as a means of preservation for the individual and the species. Therefore the ancients termed the intellect the *ἡγεμονικὸν*, the path-finder and leader. The intellect is destined for the service of the will, and is always exactly conformed to that. Beasts of prey require and have evidently more of it than the graminivora. The elephant, and to some extent the horse, appear to be exceptions. But the astonishing intellect of the elephant was necessary, because with his two hundred years' life-term, and small proliferation, the will in his case had to provide for the longer and surer preservation of the *individual*, and that in lands abounding in the strongest and most voracious beasts of prey. The horse, too, has a longer lease of life and fewer offspring than the ruminants ; and being without horns, tusks, trunk, or any weapon but his hoofs, he needed more intelligence and greater fleetness to escape from his enemies. The extraordinary intelligence of the apes was necessary, partly because of their lengthened term of life, which extends to fifty years, and their limited offspring, and partly because they have hands, to employ which there must be a corresponding degree of understanding, and to the use of which they are referred, as well in the way of self-defence by external weapons — sticks

and stones — as also in the way of alimentation, dictating various artificial means, — such as the cracking of nuts with stones, and the insertion of a stone as wedge into the shell of the giant mussel, which would otherwise close upon and wound the hand, and which altogether necessitates a social and artificial system of robbery, such as the passing of stolen fruit from hand to hand, the stationing of sentinels, etc. We must add that this intelligence is peculiar, for the most part, to the youth of the creature, while the muscular power is yet undeveloped. The young pongo or orang-outang has in early life a relatively preponderating brain and much greater intelligence than in mature age, when developed muscular force comes in to supply the place of the diminishing intellect. . . . The will in all these cases is the *prius*, the intellect the *posterius*. Beasts of prey do not hunt, nor foxes steal, because they have superior intelligence; but because they will to live by hunting and stealing, they have greater intelligence. . . . A singular illustration of our thesis is the case of the dodo, or *Didus ineptus*, of the Island Mauritius, whose species, as is well known, is now extinct. This creature, as its Latin name indicates, was excessively stupid, — in fact, too stupid to endure; from which it appears that Nature for once had gone too far with her *lex parsimonice*, and, as often with individuals, so here with a species, produced a monster which, as such, could not survive."

Under the head of *Illustrations from Vegetable Nature*, he cites instances of efforts made by plants to gain light, or moisture, or needed support. Potatoes in deep dark cellars have been

known to send forth shoots twenty feet in length to reach an aperture in the wall. If a vessel of water be placed within six inches of certain garden plants and left over night, they will be found in the morning to have dipped their leaves in it. The young convolvulus finds the neighboring stake, although its position be daily changed. Detach the tendril and twine it the other way, and it will untwist itself and resume its original bent, or die in the attempt. Duhamel placed some beans in a cylinder filled with moist earth. In due time they began to germinate, sending naturally their plumulæ upwards to the light, and their radiculæ downwards into the soil. After a few days the cylinder was turned to the distance of a fourth part of its circumference; then, after another interval, again and still again, until it had performed an entire revolution. Then the beans were taken from the earth, and it appeared that with each change in the cylinder they had changed their direction in accommodation to it, — the young shoots striving upwards, the roots downwards, until they had formed a perfect spiral. Frorieps has an essay on the locomotion of plants. When the soil in which they are rooted is poor, and good soil is near, they drop a twig into the good soil; the original plant dies, but the twig takes root and becomes the plant.

In the chapter on Physical Astronomy, in which he traces the action of will in the inorganic world, he is glad to find confirmation of his doctrine in a passage in Sir John Herschel's "Outlines of Astronomy :"—

"All bodies with which we are acquainted, when raised into the air and quietly abandoned, descend to the earth's surface in lines perpendicular to it. They are therefore urged thereto by a force or effort, the direct or indirect result of a consciousness and a will existing somewhere, though beyond our power to trace, which force we term gravity."

Sir John, it seems, was very much censured for this statement by his reviewer, who, as an Englishman, says Schopenhauer, was first of all concerned to see that Mosaic tradition took no detriment. He thinks that the great astronomer had a right *apperçu* in this case ; but, like most empirics, was entangled with the notion that will is inseparable from consciousness.

"That will is to be ascribed to the lifeless, the inorganic," he says, "I was the first to maintain. With me will is not, as the common opinion represents it, an accident of knowledge, and therefore of life, but life itself is the appearing of will. Knowledge, on the contrary, is truly an accident of life, and life of matter. But matter itself is only the perceptibility (*Wahrnehmbarkeit*) of the phenomena of will."

Besides the negative atheism, which consists in

denying to the Supreme Will — the Creative Power — intelligence, conscious or unconscious, which constitutes the distinguishing feature of his philosophy, Schopenhauer's writings contain strong positive expressions of disbelief in a God. The most striking which occurs to me is the following from a chapter on Theism, in a treatise on Religion in the *Parerga and Paralipomena*.

“As polytheism is the personification of single portions and powers of Nature, so monotheism is the personification of the whole of Nature at one blow. But when I attempt to imagine myself as standing before an individual Being to whom I should say : ‘My Creator, once I was nothing ; but thou hast produced me, so that I am now something, and, in fact, myself!’ and as adding, ‘I thank thee for this benefit!’ and, to crown the whole, as avowing, ‘If I have been good for nothing, it is my fault,’ — I confess that, in consequence of my philosophical and Indological studies, my head has become incapable of enduring such a thought. . . . Whether one makes an idol of wood, stone, metal, or constructs it from abstract ideas, it is all the same ; it is idolatry whenever one has a personal being in view to whom one sacrifices, whom one invokes, whom one thanks. And, at bottom, there is not much difference between sacrificing one's sheep or one's inclinations.”

The most cursory account of Schopenhauer's philosophy demands some notice of his ethical views ; the rather that these, though not the most essential point in his system, are a characteristic

feature of the man. Besides, it concerns us to know that, while Christian and most theistical writers lay the foundation of morals in the being of God, and while conversely, according to Kant, the consciousness of moral obligation assures the being of God,—an ethical basis may be found, independently of theism, in the nature of man; that morality is not so dependent on theological belief that the two must stand or fall together. When Sir Thomas Browne avers that he gives to the poor not that the hungry may be fed and the naked clothed, but that God may be obeyed, he strikes at the root of ethics; he makes right the creation of arbitrary will; he declares in effect that might makes right. However certain the being of God, the reality of right is equally certain; if indeed we can separate the one from the other. To base the surer on the less sure, moral obligation on belief in God, is a flat inversion of the true philosophic order; it is standing the cone on its apex instead of its base. Schopenhauer knows no God in the ordinary theistic sense; but the absoluteness of moral obligation is as clear to him, as stoutly maintained by him, as by any preceding ethicist. “To preach morals,” he says, “is easy; to establish the foundation of morals is difficult.” In 1840 the Royal Academy of Sciences in Copenhagen proposed as the subject of a prize

— essay the true foundation of moral science: “*Philosophiæ moralis fons et fundamentum; utrum in idea moralitatis quæ immediate conscientia contineatur et ceteris notionibus fundamentalibus quæ ex illa prodeant, explicandis quærenda sunt, an in alio cognoscendi principio?*” Schopenhauer’s essay on this theme did not receive the prize, and perhaps did not deserve it; but it does deserve to be read for its very great value as a dissertation at once profound and entertaining, learned and genial, on a very abstruse subject,—as a clear exposition of the author’s own views, and a worthy demonstration, if not of the whole ground, at least of a very important province, of moral science. He endeavors to answer the question proposed by seeking the true criterion of worth in action. This he finds in the absence of all egoistic motive, of all expectation or desire of good to the actor. He contends for the possibility and the fact of entire disinterestedness in action.

“It will be conceded to me, I think, that many a one helps and gives, performs and renounces, without any other purpose in his heart than that of helping the individual whose need he sees. That Arnold of Winkelried, when he exclaimed: ‘*Trüwen, lieben Eidgenossen, wuttl’s minem Wip und Kinde gedenken,*’ and then embraced as many of the enemy’s spears as he could gather in his arms,—had a selfish purpose in so doing, let him believe who can; I cannot.

“Egoism and moral worth mutually exclude each other. This is true not merely of acts performed for the present manifest use and profit of the actor, but of those which look to any, however distant, advantage to be secured in this or any other world ; of all in which the actor has in view his honor, his popular repute, the esteem of this or that individual, or the sympathy of spectators ; of all in which the purpose is to maintain a principle from which eventually one expects benefit to one’s self, — as the principle of justice, of universal helpfulness ; it is true of all in which the motive is the expediency of obeying, or the fear of disobeying, the command of an unknown but superior power ; it is true of all in which the actor is concerned to maintain his own high opinion of himself, his dignity and worth, whether clearly or vaguely conceived, and fears to lose his self-respect, and thereby to suffer hurt to his pride ; it is true, finally, of all by which the actor, according to the principles of Wolff, seeks his own perfection. In short, whatever the object to be gained, so long as the act in any way respects the weal or woe of the actor, it is egoistic, and consequently destitute of moral value. Only when the ultimate end of the act or omission to act regards directly and exclusively the weal or woe of another, does that act or omission bear the stamp of moral worth.”

Having established this criterion of moral in action, he is led by it to find in compassion the supreme virtue and the source of all that properly deserves that name.

“If the weal and woe of our fellow-men are to be the governing motive in action ; if obedience to that motive

constitutes the moral value of an act, — then it needs that we identify ourselves with them, that we feel their wants as our wants, their suffering as our suffering. This is compassion. In compassion the difference between me and my brother is lost sight of; he is I, and I am he. Accordingly, an act is virtuous, has moral value, in proportion as it unifies the actor with his fellow-man, or rather, according to the measure in which it results from such unification. Why is it that cruelty more than any other wickedness provokes our wrath? It is because it is the extreme opposite of compassion.”

The losing of one's self for and in others; the practical negation of any dividing line between me and my neighbor; the confounding of *meum* and *tuum*, in a sense the reverse of that trespassing on other's rights, which is commonly understood by the phrase, — this is the essence of Schopenhauer's ethic. And here his Orientalism and his idealism come in as metaphysical sponsors and vouchers of his ethical system. They have taught him that that distinction of individuals, one from another, which his moral theory would have us forget, has in fact no existence for the deeper thought of the philosophic mind. All men not only behoove to be pragmatically, but *are* actually, one. There is no I and no you, and no he or she, if we go to the root of being. The seeming plurality is a sensuous illusion, a figment of the brain. “Whereon,” he asks, “depend all plurality and numerical

difference of beings?" On space and time; these are the true *principium individuationis*, the ground of individuality. But Kant has taught us that space and time are merely forms of perception; they have no existence out of ourselves. And if time and space are ideal, then plurality is merely phenomenal; there is but one being. So taught the Upanishads of the Vedas; so taught the Pythagoreans, the Eleatics, the Neoplatonists, who affirmed all souls to be one by reason of the unity of things. Scotus Erigena, in the ninth century, endeavored to reproduce this doctrine with the forms and expressions of the Christian religion; Giordano Bruno sealed his faith in it with a painful death. Spinoza's name is identified with it. And when in our day Kant had annihilated the old dogmatism, and the world stood shuddering at the smoking ruins, Schelling's eclectic philosophy revived the knowledge of the truth.

The real unity of all being, — individuality an empty show, — this is the speculative basis of Schopenhauer's ethical system. The non-separation, in practice, of self from others, the merging of self in others, is the thence-resulting duty and law; the feeling of compassion proper to human nature is the inborn voucher of that law; compassionate action, self-sacrifice for other's good, is the supreme virtue.

And this virtue of self-sacrifice, this self-abnegation, in addition to its positive import and its manifestation in philanthropic action, has also its negative side, in what our philosopher terms abnegation of the will to live. This most idiomatic is also the deepest thing in his system; the most searching if true, the falsest if false. It is not brought forward in the "Ethik" proper, but is much insisted on in the larger work. The following extract from the Supplement to the Fourth Book illustrates the import of his thought in this direction :¹ —

"The ancients, especially the Stoics, as also the Peripatetics and Academics, tasked themselves in vain to prove that virtue suffices to make life happy. Experience cried aloud against them. The underlying thought in the effort of those philosophers was the assumption that whoso was free from fault ought also in justice to be free from suffering, — that is, to be happy. But the grave and deep solution of the problem lies in the Christian doctrine, that there is no justification by works, and that though a man should practise all justice and philanthropy, — the *ἀγαθόν*, the *honestum*, — he still would not be, as Cicero supposes, 'culpa omni carens;' for, as Calderon, far more profound than those sages, in the light of Christianity, expressed it, 'el delito mayor del hombre es haber nacido,' — man's

¹ This Supplement, by the way, bears as its motto the significant words of the Chinese sage, Lao-tseu-Tao-te-king, in the French of Stanislaus Julien: "Tous les hommes désirent uniquement de se délivrer de la mort; ils ne savent pas se délivrer de la vie."

greatest fault is that he was born. In consequence of this primal sin, — which must have proceeded from his will, — man, although he may have practised all the virtues, remains justly exposed to physical and mental sufferings, and therefore is not happy. But that works cannot justify, — as Paul and Augustine and Luther teach, since we are all essentially sinners, and shall be, — is grounded at last on this: that *operari sequitur esse*, to act as we ought we must also be what we ought. But then we should need no redemption from our present condition; that redemption which not only Christianity, but Brahmanism and Buddhism represent as the highest goal; that is, we should not need to be something different, something opposite to what we are. . . . Accordingly, the only real sin is hereditary sin. This the Christian myth represents as originating after the birth of man, and by fiction imputes to him *per impossibile*, freedom of will. But that it does simply as myth. The innermost kernel and spirit of Christianity is the same with that of Brahmanism and Buddhism. They all teach that the human race by its very existence has incurred a heavy burden of guilt; only that Christianity does not, like the elder religions, proceed in this matter directly and frankly, does not squarely impute the guilt to existence itself, but derives it from the act of the first human pair. . . . Conformably to what has been said, existence is to be regarded as an aberration, the return from which is redemption. It bears throughout this character. In this sense it is taken by the oldest Samanean religions, and also, although in a circuitous way, by genuine and original Christianity. Even Judaism, in the doctrine of the fall of man, — its only redeeming feature, — contains the germ of this view. Only Greek heathenism

and Islam are wholly optimistic. With the Greeks the opposite tendency found vent in their tragedy ; but Islam, the newest, is also the worst of all the religions. In fact no purpose can be assigned as the end of our existence but the recognition of the fact that it were better not to exist. This is the weightiest of all truths, which must therefore be proclaimed. However it may contrast with the modern European way of thinking, it is nevertheless in all unislamized Asia the most universally acknowledged and fundamental truth.

“When we contemplate the will to live in the whole and objectively, we have to think of it, in accordance with what has been said, as laboring under an illusion ; to return from which, — that is, to renounce all one’s hitherto striving, — is what the religions call self-denial, — *abnegatio sui ipsius*. For the will to live is the real self. The moral virtues, justice and humanity, having, as I have shown, when genuine, their source in this, — that the will to live, piercing through the *principium individuationis*, recognizes itself again in all its manifestations, — these virtues are an indication, a symptom, that the will which is manifest in us is no longer altogether fixed in that illusion, but is beginning to be undeceived, and, as one might figuratively express it, is already flapping its wings and preparing for flight. Conversely, injustice, malice, cruelty, are indications of the contrary ; that is, of the deepest enslavement to that illusion.

“The perfect exercise of the moral virtues involves poverty, manifold privations and sufferings in those who practise them ; and therefore ascetic, in the narrowest sense, the renunciation of property, wilful pursuit of the disagreeable and repulsive, self-torture, fasting, the

hair-shirt, and mortifications, are justly rejected by many as superfluous. Justice itself is the hair-shirt, — a source of constant discomfort to him who practises it ; philanthropy, which gives away the needful, is a perpetual fasting. This being the result of the moral virtues, the Vedanta philosophy says rightly, that when true knowledge and, in consequence of that, entire resignation, which is the second birth, has taken place, the morality or immorality of the former conversation becomes a matter of indifference. “Finditur nodus cordis, dissolvuntur omnes dubitationes, ejusque opera evanescent, viso supremo illo.”¹

In connection with his doctrine of the abnegation of the will to live, Schopenhauer says : —

“The death of the individual is the ever-repeated question which Nature puts to each in turn : ‘Have you had enough? will you come out of me?’ And in order that this question may be asked the more frequently, therefore the life of the individual is so short.”

In perfect accord with this view, that the will is the only real and enduring thing in us, whilst the intellect, which gives us our individual consciousness, is merely a physical incident, Schopenhauer denies to the human individual conscious immortality. Immortality in his view of it belongs to the unconscious will, the innermost kernel of our being, not to the conscious individual.

“He will least of all fear to become nothing at death who has come to know that he is already nothing, and has

¹ Sansara, sloca 32.

therefore ceased to feel any interest in his individuality ; because in him knowledge has, as it were, burned and consumed the will [to live], so that no desire of individual existence any longer remains to him."

The following passages from the chapter entitled "Death and its Relation to the Indestructibleness of our Essential Being," may serve to indicate the drift of his thought on this fascinating topic : —

"If such considerations are calculated to awaken the conviction that there is something in us which death cannot destroy, it is only by raising us to a point of view from which it is seen that birth is not the commencement of our being. From this it follows that what has been represented as indestructible by death is not the proper *individuum*. That is something produced by generation, bearing the properties of father and mother. It is therefore merely a variety of the species. As such it can have only a finite existence. As, therefore, the individual has no recollection of his existence before birth, he can have as little of his present existence after death. Yet every one places his *ego* in consciousness : that seems to him bound up in his individuality ; with the loss of that all that is proper to him, all that distinguishes him from others, as this particular individual, appears to perish. His continued existence without individuality seems to him indistinguishable from that of all being. He sees his *ego* sink away. . . But the *ego* is the dark point in consciousness : just as the point at which the optic nerve enters the retina is blind ; as the brain itself is almost without sensation ; as the body of the sun is dark ; as the eye, which sees all things, sees not itself. Our knowing faculty is turned

outward ; it has wholly an outward direction ; it is a function of the brain intended for self-preservation, for seeking nourishment and the capture of prey. Therefore we know of this *individuum* only as it presents itself to external contemplation. Could the individual bring to his consciousness what he is over and above that, he would willingly let his individuality slide ; he would laugh at the tenacity of his attachment to it ; he would say : ‘ What do I care for the loss of this individual, seeing I have in me the possibility of countless individuals ? ’ he would see that though no continuation of his individual being awaits him, he is just as well off without it, inasmuch as he carries within himself a full compensation for the want of it. It is further to be considered that the individuality of most men is such a wretched and worthless thing that they really lose nothing in parting with it. The only thing in them which may possibly have some value is the universal human ; and of this the perpetuity is assured to them. In fact, the stark immutability, the essential limitation of every individuality, as such, if perpetuated without end, would by its monotony beget such satiety that in order to be rid of it one would rather go to nothing. To demand individual immortality is, properly speaking, to desire endless perpetuation of an error. For at bottom every individuality is a special error ; a misstep ; something which had better not be ; to come out of which is the true end of life. In confirmation of this it may furthermore be said that most men, — in fact all men, — are so constituted that they would never be happy, to whatever world they might be transferred ; for just so far as difficulty and trouble were excluded from that world, they would fall a prey to *ennui* ; and just so far as provision were made against *ennui*, they would fall into difficulties, plagues, and sorrows.

“When an individual experiences fear of death there appears this singular and ludicrous phenomenon, — that the lord of the worlds, who fills the universe with his being, and through whom alone all that is has its being, trembles and fears to perish and to sink into the abyss of eternal nothing, — while in truth all is filled with him, and there is no place in which he is not, and no being in which he does not live, since it is he that bears existence, not existence him. Yet it is he who trembles in the individual, suffering fear of death, a victim of the illusion due to the *principium individuationis*, which limits his existence by that of the dying. This illusion is a part of the heavy dream in which as will to live he is plunged. . . . What sleep is to the individual, that death is to the will as *Ding an sich*. It could not bear the continuance through eternity of the same doing and suffering with no real profit, if memory and individuality remained. It casts these off, — that is Lethe; and, refreshed by the sleep of death, appears a new being, —

“‘To new shores lures the new day.’

“We arrive thus at a kind of metempsychosis; but with this difference, that not the entire $\psi\chi\eta$, not the cognitive part, but only the will is included in it. . . . Death is the great corrective which the will to live, and the egoism that belongs to it, receives from the course of Nature. . . . the destruction by force of the ground-error of our being. We are something that ought not to be, and therefore we cease to be. . . . To sum up all that has been said: Death is the great opportunity to be no more *I*. Happy is he who improves it! The moment of death is the moment of liberation; hence the serenity and peace apparent in the face of the dead.”

He who is truly resigned will not desire the continuance of his personality ; he freely renounces this known existence ; that which is to take its place is in our view nothing, because our existence is nothing in relation to that. The Buddhist doctrine calls it *Nirwana* ; that is, extinction.

An important point in all ethical systems is the question of free agency. Are human actions determined by invincible necessity, or do they, or can they in any case, originate in absolute freedom of choice ? Schopenhauer maintains the former. In an essay which obtained the prize of the Danish Academy on the Freedom of the Will, he ascribes freedom to being, but denies it to action. Being is the manifestation of the one universal will. That, having nothing behind it, must of course be absolutely free. But the private will, as exerted in conscious action, being bounded by the universal, is of necessity determined by it, and can will only what lies in the given nature of the individual. Therefore, the consciousness which men claim to have of freedom of choice is illusory. Consciousness, limited by the universal will, is not a competent witness in the case ; it does not reach to the origin of action.

“The self-consciousness of every man tells him distinctly that he can do what he will ; and as he is capable of conceiving of entirely opposite acts as willed by him,

it follows, of course, that he can perform either of those opposite acts if he will. Hence the rude mind, confounding things that are very different, concludes that in a given case a man can *will* opposite acts, and calls this freedom of will. But that is not what consciousness really says. What it says is, that of two opposite acts a man can do this one if he will, or that one if he will : but whether he can will the one as well as the other in a given case remains undecided ; that is a matter for deeper investigation, and lies beyond the power of self-consciousness. . . . The question concerning free agency is a touchstone by which to distinguish profound minds from those which are superficial, — a boundary stone where these two classes separate : the former all maintaining that every act is a necessary consequence of a given character and motive ; the latter, together with the great multitude, professing freedom of will. . . . Are two modes of action possible to a given individual under given conditions, or only one ? The answer of all deep thinkers is, ‘ Only one.’ . . . All that happens, from the greatest to the least, happens necessarily. *Quidquid fit necessario fit.* . . . Whoever is frightened at these conclusions, has still something to learn and something to unlearn. Then he will perceive that they are the richest source of consolation and peace. Our acts are not a first beginning ; nothing new is brought into being by them : by what we do we only learn what we are.”

Whoever has heard of Schopenhauer, or knows anything about him, knows of his pessimism. By pessimism is meant the doctrine that things are as bad as they can be ; that life, as such, is an evil ;

that for even the most fortunate it is a misfortune to have been born. As optimism means that the world is the best possible world, so pessimism conceives it to be the worst possible. The former view is a logical consequence of theism, the latter of atheism. If theism is true, if the world is the product of a Being of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, it must of necessity be the best possible world. Not the best conceivable, because our conception may ignore the necessary metes and bounds of finite Nature: we may imagine the advantages of opposite conditions united in one; we may imagine tropical and arctic splendors combined, with a temperature deliciously exempt from excess of heat or cold: we may imagine all sorts of impossibilities: not the best imaginable, but the best possible. Schopenhauer, on the contrary, maintains that the world as we have it is the worst possible world. Not the worst imaginable; for we may imagine all sorts of evils which do not exist: but the worst possible. Were it worse than it is, it could not subsist; the evil in it, working destruction, would overbalance the conservative forces, and universal ruin ensue. A certain amount of good is essential to the preservation of life. In the world, as at present constituted, there is no more good, he thinks, than is absolutely needed for that end.

This doctrine is evidently a favorite topic. He

finds a bitter satisfaction in multiplying proofs of human misery ; he publishes " our woe " with the zeal of a propagandist. Here is what he says in the chapter entitled, " Of the Nothingness and Sorrows of Life : " —

" Awaking into life out of the night of unconsciousness, the Will finds itself an individual in a world without end or bound, among countless individuals, all struggling, suffering, erring ; and he hurries as through an anxious dream back into the old unconsciousness. Meanwhile his wishes are boundless, his demands inexhaustible, and every satisfied wish gives birth to a new one. No satisfaction within the possibilities of this world would suffice to still his longing or set a final term to his desire. No satisfaction can fill the bottomless abyss of his heart. Consider, besides, what kind of satisfactions generally fall to the lot of man. For the most part nothing more than the meagre support of life, accomplished with unremitting pains and ceaseless care in the battle with necessity, with death in prospect. Everything in life advises us that the pursuit of happiness is destined to be frustrated, or the end attained to prove an illusion. It has been so arranged in the constitution of things. In accordance with this the life of most men is sorrowful and brief. The comparatively happy are so for the most part only in appearance ; or, like instances of longevity, they are rare exceptions, for which provision has been made, that they may serve as decoys. Life presents itself as a constant cheat, in little as in great. What it promised it fails to perform, or performs only to show how undesirable was that which we desired. Thus either the wish or the thing

wished deludes. If it gives, it is only to take away. The magic of distance shows us paradises which, like optical illusions, vanish, if we let ourselves be fooled into the pursuit of them. Accordingly, happiness is always in the future, or else in the past. The present is a small black cloud which the wind drives over a sun-bright surface. Before and behind all is light; but always the present flings a shadow. It is always unsufficing, the future uncertain, the past irrevocable. Life with its hourly, daily, weekly and yearly, small and great and greater contradictions, with its disappointed hopes, its mishaps frustrating all calculation, bears undeniably the stamp of something that was meant to be bitterness. It is difficult to understand how men could ever mistake this fact, how they could ever suffer themselves to be persuaded that life was given to be thankfully enjoyed, and that man was made to be happy. On the contrary, this perpetual illusion and disenchantment, and the whole pervading quality of life, shows it designed and devised to awaken in us the conviction that nothing is worth our striving, driving, and struggling; that all goods are vanity, the world in all its parts bankrupt, and life a business that does not pay, — in order that our will may detach itself from it.

“Our life resembles a payment which is doled out to us in instalments of coppers, and for which, nevertheless, we are obliged to give quittance. The coppers are days, the quittance is death. For time at last pronounces sentence on the value of all that appears in it by annihilating all.

“‘And justly so; for all that is brought forth

Deserves to perish: that is all ’t is worth.

T’ were therefore better nothing were brought forth.’¹

¹ Mephistopheles, in *Faust*.

Thus old age and death, the goal towards which all life is inevitably hastening, are the judgment passed by Nature herself on the will to live, — a judgment which declares that this will is an effort that must frustrate herself. ‘What thou hast willed,’ it says, ‘ends so ; will something better.’ This, then, is the lesson of life to every man. It teaches him that the objects of his wishes forever deceive, waver, and fall, and therefore yield more torment than pleasure ; until finally the whole ground and bottom on which they rest breaks through, his life itself is annihilated, and he thence receives the final confirmation of the truth, that all his willing and striving was a perversity, an aberration.

“ ‘Then old age and experience, hand in hand,
Lead him to death, and make him understand,
After a search so painful and so long,
That all his life he has been in the wrong.’

“But let us come to particulars ; for these are the views in which I have experienced the greatest opposition.” I have first to confirm the assertion made in the text, of the negative character of all satisfaction, enjoyment, happiness, and the positiveness of all pain.

“We feel pain, but do not feel painlessness. We are conscious of care, but not of exemption from care ; of fear, but not of safety. We feel our wishes as we feel hunger and thirst ; but as soon as the wish is fulfilled it is with that as it is with the morsel we taste ; when swallowed it ceases to exist for our consciousness. We miss enjoyments and pleasures painfully as soon as they are withdrawn ; but our pains when, after a long trial, they cease, are not missed directly, but only through reflection. For only pain and privation are capable of being positively felt. These speak

for themselves ; well-being is merely negative. Hence it is that we are not conscious of the three chief goods of life, — health, youth, and freedom, — as long as we possess them, but only when we have lost them ; and then they are also negations. That any of the days of our life were happy we first perceive when they have given place to days of sorrow. In the measure in which enjoyments multiply, sensibility diminishes ; the accustomed ceases to be felt as a good. But, on the other hand, from this very cause, we become more sensitive to suffering ; for want of the accustomed is painfully felt. The more pleasant the hours, the more quickly they fly ; the sadder, the slower, because pain, not enjoyment, is the positive thing whose presence makes itself felt. For the same reason, *ennui*, not amusement, makes us sensible of time. These two things prove that our existence is happiest then, when we are least conscious of it ; from which it follows that it were better not to have it at all. A great and vivid joy is positively inconceivable without previous need ; for a state of enduring satisfaction admits of no addition, except perhaps amusement, or the gratification of vanity. Hence all poets are compelled to place their heroes in anxious and painful situations, in order to deliver them therefrom. Drama and epos universally portray only struggling, suffering, tortured mortals ; and every novel is a show-box in which we behold the spasms and convulsions of the tortured human heart. This æsthetic necessity Walter Scott has *naïvely* exposed in the conclusion of ‘ Old Mortality.’ Quite in accordance with these truths, Voltaire, favored as he was by nature and fortune, says : ‘ Happiness is only a dream, and pain is real ;’ and adds, ‘ this is the result of my eighty years’ experience. I know nothing for it but to

submit and to say to myself, that flies are born to be eaten by spiders, and men to be devoured by sorrows (*chagrins*).’

“Before one pronounces so confidently that life is a desirable good, a thing to be thankful for, let him calmly compare the sum of possible joys which a man can have in a lifetime with the sum of possible sufferings. I believe the balance will not be difficult to cast. But at bottom it is quite superfluous to contend whether good or evil preponderates in life; the mere existence of evil decides the matter, since it never can be abolished, and consequently never neutralized, by any accompanying or subsequent good. For if it were true that thousands have lived in happiness and joy, the fact could never cancel the anguish and death-torments of a single individual. Just as little can my present well-being cause my past sufferings never to have been. If, therefore, the evil that is in the world were a hundredfold less than it is, still the mere existence of evil would be sufficient to establish a truth which may be expressed in different ways, though always somewhat indirectly, — to wit, that we are not to rejoice in the existence of the world, but rather to grieve at it; that its non-existence would be preferable; that the world is something which, all things considered, ought not to be.’

. . . Right beautiful is Byron’s statement of this matter :

“‘Our life is a false nature; ’t is not in

The harmony of things, this hard decree,

This ineradicable taint of sin,

This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree,

Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be

The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew —

Disease, death, bondage — all the woes we see, —

And worse, the woes we see not — which throb through

The immedicable soul with heart-aches ever new.’

“Small incidents have power to make us perfectly wretched; nothing in this world can make us perfectly happy. Whatever one may say, the happiest moment of the happy is the moment of falling asleep; as the most unhappy moment of the unhappy is the moment of waking.

“If the world were not something that, practically expressed, ought not to be, it would not be theoretically a problem. On the contrary, its existence would either need no explanation, it would be so intelligible in itself that no one would ever think of wondering or inquiring about it; or else the purpose of it would unmistakably present itself. Instead of that it is an insoluble problem; the most perfect philosophy will always contain an inexplicable something, like an insoluble element, or like the remainder left by the irrational relation of two quantities. Therefore, when any one ventures to propound the question why it were not better that nothing should exist than that this world should exist, the world will be found not to justify itself from itself; no reason, no final cause of its existence can be found in it by which it could be shown to exist for its own sake, for its own advantage.

“On the other side it is maintained that life from beginning to end was designed to be a lesson. But to this every one might answer: ‘For that very reason I wish I had been left in the peace of all-sufficient nothingness, where I should need no lessons nor anything else.’ And if, in addition to all this, he is told that he must one day give account of every hour of his life, he, on the contrary, would be rather entitled to demand an account for having been transported from that rest into such a questionable, gloomy, anxious, and painful position. . . . For human

existence, far from having the character of a gift, has altogether that of a contracted debt. The payment of that debt appears in the form of the pressing necessities which life brings, its tormenting wishes and endless suffering. Generally, a whole lifetime is spent in discharging it ; and then it is only the interest that is cancelled. The payment of the capital is death.

“And to such a world, to this arena of vexed and tormented beings, which subsists only by mutual devouring one of another, so that every voracious animal is the grave of thousands, and self-preservation a chain of martyr-deaths ; a world where the susceptibility of suffering increases with increase of knowledge, and reaches its highest grade in man the higher, the more intelligent he is, — to such a world it has been attempted to apply the system of optimism, proving it to be the best possible world. The absurdity is crying. Nevertheless the optimist asks me to open my eyes and look at the world, and see how beautiful it is in the sunlight, with its mountains, valleys, rivers, plants, animals, etc. But is the world then a show-box ? To be sure, these things are beautiful to look at ; but to *be* these things is another matter. Then comes the teleologist, and praises me the wise arrangement by virtue of which the planets are prevented from knocking their heads together, and land and sea are not mixed in a general mud-pie, but kept nicely apart ; by virtue of which everything is not congealed with frost or roasted with heat, and in consequence of the obliquity of the ecliptic, there is no perpetual spring, in which nothing would come to maturity, etc. But these and the like are merely *conditiones sine quibus non*. If there is to be a world at all, if the planets are to last but so long as it takes a ray

of light from some remote fixed star to reach them. . . . then, of course, the world must not be so clumsily put together that its ground-frame would be liable to cave in. But when we proceed to test the results of the work so praised, and consider the actors who play their parts on this so durably constructed stage ; when we observe how sensibility is always accompanied with pain, which increases in the measure in which sensibility develops into intelligence, and how, keeping pace with intelligence, greed and suffering are ever more intense, until at last the life of man is good for nothing but to furnish material for tragedies and comedies, — then verily no one who is not a hypocrite will be disposed to sound Hallelujahs."

My criticism of Schopenhauer's philosophy must needs be brief. I desire first of all to express my hearty appreciation of its merits in one or two points in which it happily contrasts with the systems of the three best-known of the post-Kantians, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and with those of most other German metaphysicians. Its foremost and distinguishing merit is that of simplicity. Here was a man who gave to the world what he saw or seemed to see ; the others planned and contrived what to give. He watched and listened, and let the universe tell him its story ; they cudgelled their brains to construct a theory of the universe. He took what came to a thoughtful, if morbid observer ; they went a hunting, and caught airy nothings. He studied facts ; they played with counters

and manipulated propositions. The aim they proposed to themselves was to schematize existence. The schemes are models of dialectic ingenuity ; but forever the scheme is one, and existence another.

“Grau, Freund, ist alle Theorie,
Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum.”

Finer and finer they wove their abstractions ; but the warp had no weft. Mistrust the philosophy that begins too far off. *Hic Rhodus, hic saltus*. These abstractionists never think they can do enough in the way of abstraction. The mathematics, one would say, are sufficiently abstract. But no, the mathematics are still on sensuous ground, they occupy themselves with number and space ; these they must have before they can begin their work ; they have to postulate a point or a space. But “Philosophy,” says Hegel, “takes leave of this last vestige of the actual.” In philosophy thought is free for itself ; it renounces both the outer and the inner world. In philosophy it is not permitted to begin with “There is, or there are.” So these transcendentalists assume for their $\pi\omicron\upsilon\ \sigma\tau\hat{\omega}$ a position outside of the actual ; and standing on nothing, — which, according to Hegel, is identical with Being, — they erect their paradigm, showing what Being should be, how begin and proceed ; and having finished the frame, invite the Actual to take possession. But the Actual

stays outside ; the refractory universe refuses to be formulized.

Few writers have given to the world more pregnant thoughts and more luminous suggestions than Hegel in his *Aesthetik*, his *Philosophy of History*, his *Philosophy of Religion*. But Hegel's metaphysic, — his system, distinctly so-called, — is a tracery of frost compared with the life-warm realism of Schopenhauer's doctrine. The former erects his elaborate structure on the proposition : Absolute being is identical with nothing. The latter starts with the premise : The world is my impression. Which beginning is most likely to lead us to the knowledge of things ? And the knowledge of things, not the building of systems, is the business of a true philosophy.

Closely connected with this earnestness of purpose is the singular perspicuity of Schopenhauer's theory. There is none of that dialectic agonizing, so wearisome in Fichte and Hegel ; that anxious defining for the start, and never getting under way ; that endless carving, and never serving, — no mystification, no hair-splitting, no logical antics, no charlatanism, no word-juggling, but an easy flow of meaning and demonstration, like the talk of a man who is full of his material and has not to create it as he goes. Profound as are the reaches of his theme, there is no obscurity in his thought

and no unintelligibleness in his statement. He is always sure of his ground, always knows what he means, and leaves no doubt of his meaning in others.

So much for the form of this philosophy. As to its contents, its positions, its doctrine, I must also give it credit for one or two things. No philosopher, I think, has made so clear the connection between the inner and outer world, the relation of reason to sense, of thought to thing. No philosopher has so convincingly illustrated the universal presence and immediate action, in the greatest and the least, of an unseen Power. His characterization of that Power is another matter. No philosopher has more successfully combated materialism in science, substituting dynamic for mechanic views of Nature, finding life in the most inert, and resolving the most fixed into free, spontaneous action of the universal Will. On the other hand, he maintains the physical character of the intellect, — a position new in idealism, and one not likely to pass unchallenged, but which constitutes an essential feature of his system. The intellect, he insists, is physical, the will metaphysical; the human *ego* the resultant of the two.

In my judgment of this system I separate the psychological in it from the ontological, — the world as impression from the world as will. My

objection relates principally to the latter. The fundamental difficulty and falsity which most critics, I think, must find in it is the inconceivableness of will without consciousness, without intelligence, without an idea or purpose to guide its action. The will in Schopenhauer's system is an empty abstraction. Will is conceivable only as the act of one that wills, only as having an agent behind it. But here is an act without an actor. Precisely the same difficulty which meets us in Hegel's system — that system so scorned by Schopenhauer — repeats itself in his. Hegel assumed as the *Ding an sich*, — as the ultimate and absolute thought, — the *Begriff*, which unfolds itself in time, and whose evolution is the universe. But *Begriff* is inconceivable without a *Begreifender*; a "concept" supposes an *aliquis concipiens*. Precisely so will implies an *aliquis volens*, and is otherwise as inconceivable as speech without speaker, or love without lover.

And how explain the first movement of this will? In the conscious subject, says Schopenhauer, it acts by motive; in the unconscious by irritation. But how before there was anything to move or to irritate? Reason requires being before willing. Schopenhauer puts willing before being, — the act before the actor. I can suppose a universe existing from all eternity, but not a universe that willed

itself into being, that willed before it was ; or, I can suppose, and must suppose, an act of volition before the world was, but not before a willing power.

This separation of the fundamental Will from conscious Intelligence and all moral attributes,—in other words, the atheism of Schopenhauer's system,—besides its inherent falsity, is the more to be regretted as being incidental, arbitrary, not demanded by logical consistency or any interior necessity. It is not essential to the system itself, which, but for this flaw, would be one of the most rational, consistent, and satisfactory schemes as yet propounded by speculative philosophy. Apart from the difficulty of conceiving a blind, unconscious will to have been the origin of a universe in which there is intelligence,—a supposition which violates the fundamental principle, that what is in the effect must be in the cause,—apart from this, one sees no reason for divesting the universal Will of intelligence. What is gained by putting asunder what human reason from everlasting has joined together ? Why should not this Power that works in all and produces all, the aboriginal, sole, enduring reality,—why should it not be intelligent ; why not conscious ; why not God ? Schopenhauer prides himself on his discovery of the compound nature of the human *ego*. He likens his merit in this

respect to that of Lavoisier. Lavoisier discovered that water, once regarded as simple, is in fact a compound substance. So he, Schopenhauer, claims to have discovered that the *ego*, once supposed to be one and indivisible, is compounded of two factors, Will and Intelligence. But the two factors, though distinguishable in thought, are inseparable in fact. There is never a human *ego* without them both. Why suppose them sundered outside of the human? Why not suppose them united in the all-working, infinite Power? Why not suppose the all-working, infinite Power to be precisely the infinite *ego* of theism? Then we have a consistent, intelligible system, an adequate cause for our effect, an effect which truly represents the cause. It may be objected that conscious intelligence added to will does not relieve the difficulty of inconceivableness; that intelligence as well as will can only be conceived as quality or act; that that conception would still need an entity, a substance in which these qualities inhere. I feel the force of the objection, and can only say that the difficulty belongs to the nature of the subject. But why increase the difficulty by adding the inconceivableness of a blind, unconscious will as the origin and ground of intelligent being? I maintain that unless we assume the existence from all eternity of a universe in which there are intelligent

beings, theism only can explain the fact of existing intelligence. The effect cannot be greater than the cause.

I condemn in this philosophy its negation of individuality. It recognizes no soul, no central and persistent principle in man which survives all changes and is indestructible. The phenomenon of individual consciousness is viewed as the product of cerebral action conditioned by each organism. It is the temporary self-limitation of the universal Will, which elects to exist for awhile in that form, then leaves and destroys it. The universal Will alone is real and immortal; all individuality is only seeming. This view of man not only contradicts the inward voice and the common sense of mankind, but it leaves unexplained the peculiarity, the separateness and persistency of personal types, which are not resolvable into differences of expression resulting from differences of physical condition.

But the grand and fatal objection to the system is the moral protest it elicits from every unsophisticated mind. I do not arraign its pessimism as such, its assertion that life is a mistake, existence an evil, misery the normal condition of man. All that, though not a necessary consequence, is yet the natural outcome, of a world without a God. The objection regards not this or that detail, but

the fundamental principle from which they result ; it concerns the whole system as a contradiction of eternal reason. Reason demands to see its reflection and antitype in nature. It demands an intelligible motive and a righteous purpose in creation. It demands a world devised and presided over by reason, and tending to good, — a world whose source is love, whose method is wisdom, and whose end is blessing. Schopenhauer's system flouts these just expectations, repudiates these sacred claims ; it mocks the deepest and dearest convictions of the heart. All worthy beliefs, all high ideals, all noble aspirations, all cherished hopes, it ruthlessly sets aside, and leaves us nothing but a blind and pitiless force, an unreasoning, unreasonable fate, a ceaseless, aimless phantom dance, in which we are whirled till we drop and disappear, and others whirl in our place, — an everlasting funeral procession of all beings from death to death.

Is it possible that human nature will ever content itself with Schopenhauer's answer to the question, — What am I ? and whence ? and why ? Is it possible that human reason can acquiesce in a system like this ? Not while a dream of Godhead yet lingers in man's thought ; not while the heart yet beats to the tune of immortality ; not while the way is open for a better solution of the problem of life !

CRITIQUE OF PESSIMISM AS TAUGHT
BY VON HARTMANN.

DOES good, or evil, preponderate in the lot of man? Is the human world advancing to millennial peace, or tending to utter ruin? Or does it fluctuate between the two, alternately gaining and losing in certain fixed proportions, which no lapse of time, no social adjustments, and no cosmic revolutions can essentially change? Are Ormuzd and Ahriman so nearly matched that neither the one nor the other in endless ages shall acquire supreme and exclusive sway.

A question old as philosophy, and still awaiting its final solution, — a solution based on irrefragable proofs, and admitting of no appeal. My aim at present is not to establish a thesis on the subject, but to criticise the position of those who maintain the doctrine of an ever-growing ascendancy of evil in human life.

Chief among these at present is Eduard von Hartmann, the last representative of the great transcendental movement which dates with Kant. Following in the track of Schopenhauer, with less

originality, but finer perceptions and superior dialectic, Von Hartmann devotes a portion of his "Philosophy of the Unconscious" to the consideration of the question whether life is a blessing; whether existence or non-existence were most to be desired. After long debate and a wide review of the subject, he concludes that non-existence is preferable, since the misery of life in every form is greatly in excess of its happiness. And this, he thinks, would be the universal judgment, were it not for certain illusions which cast their glamour on the mind, and encourage the belief that life is a good to be desired. Three stages of illusion he conceives to be the source of this deplorable fallacy.

The first stage is that in which happiness is viewed as something which has been attained in this present world, and is therefore attainable still within the limits of the present life. The second stage is that in which happiness is believed to be reserved for some future transmundane state. The third is that in which happiness is expected to ensue from the consummation of the world's progressive development.

Under the first head our philosopher passes in review all the satisfactions and goods of life,—health, competence, honor, power, family joys, science, art, religion. Each of these is subjected to a rigorous scrutiny: its yield of pleasure is

balanced against its inevitable sequence of pain; and in each case the result is a *minus*, depressing the value of life below the zero of indifference, and proving that, on the whole, it is a misfortune to be.

There is nothing original in this conclusion. Voices many and weighty, ancient and modern, affirm the same. "Wherefore I praised the dead," says Ecclesiastes, "more than the living. Yea, better than both is he that hath not been." Says Socrates, — or Plato speaking in his name, — "Let a man compare all the other days and nights of his life with some night in which he slept without a dream: how few will he find that were passed so pleasantly as that!" Sophocles makes the chorus in "Œdipus at Colonus" say: "Not to be is the supreme word; the next best is that, having been born, a man should depart as quickly as possible thither whence he come." Byron repeats the sentiment in that verse of despair, —

"Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
'Tis something better not to be."

D'Alembert speaks of the "*malheur d'être*." Voltaire gives it as the result of eighty years' experience, that suffering is the end of life. Hamlet thinks that only the dread of something after death can restrain the suicidal hand.

To these and similar utterances the answer is plain. They are criticisms, reflections on life ; and not the spontaneous verdict of life itself, the verdict which a healthy nature pronounces on life as it passes. I oppose to them the testimony of competent witnesses ; I cite expressions of abounding joy in being. This from Emerson, yet unknown to fame, with scant means and a doubtful future : “Almost I fear to think how glad I am. Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous.”

This from Charles Lamb, who had had his full share of mortal woe : —

“I am in love with this green earth, the face of town and country, the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and fireside conversations, and innocent vanities and jests.”

English literature has no soberer poet than Wordsworth, — a man whose temperament inclined to melancholy ; but what a witness to the value of life who knew

“ that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; ’t is her privilege
Through all the years of this our life to lead
From joy to joy ; for she can so inform

The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings."

All this the pessimist pronounces a delusion. Be it so. All reality, so far as the individual is concerned, is subjective. The value of life for me is what I find in it. If it yields to my consciousness a preponderance of good, I am justified in my optimism. We may be deceived as to the ground of our joy in life, but the joy itself is no delusion. I concede to the pessimist that pleasure is superficial. Enjoyment plays on the surface of life. Disturb that surface, mar it at any point, and straightway the underlying pain obtrudes. And by what insignificant trifles the surface-joy is disturbed! In the midst of a happy day let the smallest, scarcely discernible mote lodge itself in the eye, let the nerve of a tooth be exposed, and immediately the day is "o'ercast," enjoyment turns to pain. I concede to the pessimist that the substance of life is labor and hardness; joy is but the sheen which in normal states it assumes in our consciousness. But observe that life by a law of its own takes on that sheen. Call it delusion, it is never-

theless a stated condition, a habit of mind, our nature's dower. Observe, too, that suicide is by common consent charged to insanity. In this consent is implied the prevailing conviction that the good of life exceeds the evil thereof.

Your pessimists, who exhaust their ingenuity in showing that existence is a failure, creation a mistake, and not-to-be the supreme good, have been swift to secure their portion of the goods of life, and to all appearance have extracted as much satisfaction therefrom as life is capable of yielding. Schopenhauer, who maintained so stoutly that true wisdom consists in abnegation of the will to live, exhibited a quite inordinate disinclination to dying; he clung to the life he reviled like the limpet to the rock.

I return to Von Hartmann. His first alleged stage of illusion, the hope of happiness in this present world, concerns, as we have seen, the lot of the individual. So does the second, the hope of happiness hereafter in some transmundane state. This involves the whole question of a future life, — the discussion of which would far exceed the scope of this essay. I pass at once to the third illusion, which respects the future of the human race on this earth. It consists in supposing that a better lot awaits mankind in the consummation of the world's history, when the evils which now afflict

society shall one by one be done away. Von Hartmann believes in no such result. He maintains that vice and misery, so far from abating, are on the increase, and will continue to increase. Theft and fraud and false dealing, in spite of the penalties attached to them, are becoming ever more frequent. The basest selfishness rends asunder the holiest bonds of family and friendship whenever it comes in collision with them; and only the severer punishments decreed by the state repress the more atrocious crimes of ruder ages. These too immediately break forth, revealing the innate brutality of human nature, wherever the bands of law and order are relaxed, as in the Polish revolution and in the closing year of the American civil war. He anticipates a time when theft and illegal fraud will be despised as vulgar and clumsy devices by the more adroit rogues, who will know how to bring their crimes against property into harmony with the letter of the law; and so on to the end.

On the other hand, he endeavors to show that the agencies at work for the melioration of the social condition, — science, art, discoveries and inventions, improved agriculture, increased facilities of communication, steam, railroad, telegraph, — inasmuch as they create as many wants as they satisfy, leave the net result of human weal unchanged. Medical

art advances, but cannot keep pace with the swifter progress of chronic disease. Agricultural and mechanical improvements, as fast as they increase the means of support, promote the growth of population, which, on the Malthusian principle, is forever outstripping them. With the growth of population come all the inevitable ills which excess of population entails. Political science can yield but negative results. Suppose the perfect state were realized, the political problem solved, we should have only the frame, not the filling. Men do not live to govern themselves, but govern themselves to live. Looking in other directions for possible compensation, he foresees that the satisfactions of intellect and taste derived from science and art will diminish with the necessary, inevitable, and ever-growing degradation of science and art which must ensue from the dilettantism which is everywhere supplanting genius. And as for the consolations of religion, — what will become of them when belief in the truths of religion, as must inevitably happen with the progress of intellectual culture, has died out? In fine, as with the progress of human development, riches and luxury increase, there will be a corresponding increase in the sensibility of the nervous system, and thence of necessity an excess of sensible pain over sensible pleasure. With the dying-out of the old illusions there will

come intense consciousness of the poverty of life, of the vanity of most of its joys and aspirations. Not only will there be increase of misery, but — what is more to the purpose — increase of the consciousness of misery. . . . The history of the individual will repeat itself in the history of the race. As the individual in childhood lives in the present ; then, as youth, revels in transcendental ideals ; then, as man, seeks fame, possession, practical knowledge ; and, finally, in old age, having come to perceive the vanity of all things, longs only for peace, and lays his weary head to rest, — so with the human race. There are evident signs of senescence, he thinks, in the human race. Who can doubt that after a period of mighty, virile activity, there will come to mankind an old age, when, living on the fruits of the past, they will enter on a period of ripe contemplation, and, embracing in one view all the sorrows, so wildly stormed through, of their past career, will comprehend the utter vanity of the once-proposed aims of their striving. But observe, he says, the difference between the race and the individual. Senile humanity will have no heirs to whom it may bequeathe its accumulated wealth, no children, no grandchildren, the love of whom might solace its decline. Then, with the sublime melancholy commonly witnessed in men of genius and the

intellectually elevated among the aged, humanity will hover as it were a transfigured spirit over its own body, and, like Œdipus, in anticipation of the peace of non-existence, will feel the sorrows of being as it were the sorrows of another, not its own, — will no longer know *passion*, but only *compassion* with itself. This is that heavenly serenity, that divine repose which breathes in Spinoza's ethic, where the passions are swallowed up in the abyss of reason, because they have been clearly and intelligibly grasped in ideas. But suppose this state of dispassionateness reached; suppose passion to be transfigured into compassion with one's self: it does not therefore cease to be sorrow. Even freedom from pain mankind grown old will not have attained; pure spirit they will not have become. In spite of weakness and decrepitude, they must still toil on in order to live, and yet will not know for what end to live. Outgrown their illusions, they will have nothing more to expect from life. Convinced at last of the folly of all their striving, they will come to despair of happiness, and only long for absolute painlessness, for annihilation, for Nirvana.

When, following Von Hartmann, I reached this conclusion, there came to my thought the curse which Faust thunders against the world, with all its illusive joys and hopes, and I seemed to

hear the wail of the spirits in response to that curse, —

“ Woe ! woe !

Destroyed it thou hast,
The beautiful world ;
With the blow of thy fist
Into ruin hast hurled.

Sadly we the lost surrender.

Fairer now,

Earth's son, in splendor

Rarer now,

Oh, recreate it !

In thine own bosom build it again ! ”

This, then, is the view of human destiny propounded by the latest soothsayer of the transcendental line ; this is the philosophy taught in a work which passed through seven editions in as many years, — a philosophy which evidently rests on a pathological foundation. To the question, “ Is life worth living ? ” it was wittily answered : “ That depends on the *liver*.” One can hardly help suspecting an unsound condition of body affecting mental vision in a writer who solemnly predicts the moral ruin of mankind on the ground of certain existing imperfections and wrongs. Were I dealing with a theist, I should say that our idea of God implies the preponderance and growth of good in all the worlds. But Von Hartmann is not a theist, although the “ All-Eine,” the central intelligence of his system, supposed to act with infallible

wisdom, is a great advance on the blind Will of Schopenhauer's philosophy,¹ a nearer approach to the God of theism. Putting out of view, then, the idea of infinite wisdom, power, and love presiding over and guiding the world's history, I oppose to the pessimist view this weighty consideration, overlooked by Von Hartmann, that moral power is in its very nature cumulative, an ever-increasing quantity. Material force, as Des Cartes, I think, was the first to point out, is a constant quantity. So much and no more of it there has been since the first impulsion given to the matter of which the world is composed. All the forces now at work in the world — correlated one with another, as science teaches — are propagations in all directions of that primal impact. In one form or another it survives, and can never cease and never increase. Given an access of it in one, and there is a proportionate diminution of it in another. If you increase the speed of your engine, you diminish your supply of heat; if you overtax your brain, you reduce the vitality of other organs.

But moral force is cumulative; its exercise in

¹ Von Hartmann was too acute not to see that will without a concept of the thing willed is an absurdity. Strange that his own substitute of a seeing and understanding, though unconscious, Will should be represented as infallibly wise only in adaptation of means to ends while wholly irrational in its end, — a world of preponderant evil.

one form by one individual not only does not lessen, but increases, its supply in another. If A puts forth his moral power in an act of self-sacrifice, his supply of that force is not exhausted, but rather increased thereby; and B, who witnesses and profits by that sacrifice, experiences in himself an accession of moral life. We may trace, I think, the growth of that life through all the ages of human history. In primitive man it is found at its minimum. The savage state has feeble perceptions of the moral law: it is a state of comparative innocence; since where there is no law there is no sin, but a very immoral state. The moral sense is restricted to good faith with friends and allies, and avoidance of flagrant trespass on others' rights. As civilization advances, society, imperilled by individual licence, protects itself with laws, and promotes social ends with exactions and requirements which make life more complex, but also more moral. Acts which before were performed without scruple become crimes. By these prohibitions and requirements the moral sense is educated. Gradually the stringency of obligation is transferred from the civil statute to the private conscience. With increase of population and increase of luxury, it is true, demoralizing influences set in; and when these become excessive they disorganize society and subvert the state, as has happened in one and

another country in the course of the world's history. But humanity rallies, it recovers itself, it takes warning from the past; the moral sentiment reacts on these corruptions; it strives and succeeds to keep the corrupting tendencies in check. Gradually moral capital is accumulated; is vested in public opinion, in memories, books, and institutions, and furnishes a guaranty against future dissolutions of the civil bond. For want of this capital ancient states, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, went down; by means of it modern states subsist, and have, so far as internal agencies are concerned, an indefinite lease of life. Evil is self-limited and self-destructive; the good in human nature is self-conserving and self-increasing. If modern society is more compact, and rests, as it evidently does, on a firmer basis than did society in ancient time, it is to be inferred that society is more moral now than then, and that increase of moral power affords a presumption of further increase from age to age. Von Hartmann insists that egoism, however it may change its face and methods, has lost nothing of its virus with the lapse of time. I maintain, on the contrary, and think it can be shown, that "altruism," or care for others, care for the common weal, is gradually making head against egoism. And herein I find a refutation of the pessimist view of human destiny.

For society, I repeat, subsists by moral force ; and increase of that force in the shape of care for the commonweal guarantees, in the absence of any physical derangement of the globe, the growth of social well-being in all coming time.

Another consideration which suggests itself in opposition to the pessimist theory, is the fact of the timely appearance, at certain points in the world's history, of exceptional individuals, whose word and life have been a healing and reviving power in the world. I waive the idea of what is called divine interposition in such phenomena. Regarding them simply as historic facts, I see in them proofs of a self-renewing power in human nature, and the promise, as human need may require and social exigencies prompt, of similar revivals in time to come. Whatever opinion we may have formed of Christianity, its origin, its present status, its future prospects, no faithful student of history will deny that the Christian movement did impart to human society a moral leaven which served to regenerate the world by reinforcing those saving agencies of faith and love whose loss is disintegration and moral death. The same may be said of each successive reformation which has reproduced the Christian idea in subsequent time. The experience of the past seems to warrant the presumption that social and moral necessities will

always elicit a remedial power from the unexplored depths and incalculable forces of the human soul, and that when things are at the worst redemption is near.

Add to this that some of the worst evils which afflict society are accidental, not inherent in the nature of man or the nature of things, but superinduced by vicious custom, and are likely to find their remedy at last in a truer perception of their nature and law, and the application of social science to the sources whence they spring. For example, one of the greatest enemies to social well-being in this country at present is the abuse of alcoholic stimulants, drunkenness, which brutalizes its victim, poisons the springs of family life, and constitutes a source so prolific of pauperism and crime. Philanthropy has labored in vain to abolish this evil by legislative action forbidding the supply, instead of seeking, by discovery of its cause, to obviate the demand. So long as the demand continues, in spite of legislation, the supply will be found. I cannot believe that the mischief of intemperance, wide-spread and deep-seated as it is, is past correction, if once its nature be rightly understood, and scientific treatment invoked for its cure. And what a load of misery will be lifted from the world, what a melioration of the social climate, prophetic of better years and finer

growths, will be achieved with the extirpation of this vice !

In fine, the pessimist view, though a natural accompaniment of atheism, is not a necessary fruit of even that dreary stock. Human nature itself, without the supposition of a God ; human nature as manifest in history and interpreted by reason, — pleads against it, and furnishes, I think, its sufficient refutation.

But whilst I am forced by these considerations to cast the horoscope of human life more auspiciously than our German pessimist draws it, I admit an element of truth in his philosophy which may temper the extravagance of superficial optimism, and tinge with soberer hues the vulgar vision of the “good time coming.” Von Hartmann himself, in an essay subsequent to his main work, from which I have quoted, vindicates the doctrine of pessimism against the charge of presenting an altogether comfortless and discouraging view of life. He argues that self, as expressed in the will, is the source of all our woes ; that since moral perfection, or the supreme good, consists in or requires the entire surrender of self, the pessimistic view, which promotes that surrender, by exposing the futility of all our wishes and the grief that is born of the private will, is stimulating, bracing, encouraging.

It is true that self is the source of the greater part of human misery ; but equally true it is that the highest satisfaction has its origin there. Extinguish self, and we escape the pangs of disappointment, the unsatisfied longing, the frustrate effort, the misery of wounded pride, of ingratitude and neglect ; but we also miss the stimulus of a noble and sanctified ambition. Moral elevation does not guarantee happiness in the vulgar sense of that word ; but neither does material prosperity assure it. Suppose that prosperity consummated the world over for all men ; make earth a paradise ; drive want from the face of it, and ignorance and vice ; let competence be secured to all ; build palaces for hovels ; let climate be attempered by art to perpetual blandness ; let there be no forced tasks, no chiding of the laggard will, no painful bracing up of the dissolute mind, but only duties which invite, and work which is play, — fashion a world after your own heart ; and know that a day in that world will have the same proportion of joy and pain that a day has in this. Our joys and our sorrows spring from the same root ; in cultivating the one we cultivate the other also. There is a root of bitterness in human life which no change of circumstance and no improvement in the outward condition can eradicate. And perhaps if we rightly understood the constitution and the wants of man

we should not wish it eradicated. It is the bitter oil in the kernel that gives the peculiar flavor to the fruit. That remnant of bitterness in the lot of man, so far from depreciating the value of human life, enhances its significance by supplying the needful tonic without which the spirit would rest and rust in sluggish contentment with the present, and, ceasing to aspire, would forfeit the prize of its higher calling. The end of man is not enjoyment, but discipline, education, growth, effective service. Given a lot of unbroken ease, and life would not be worth living.



MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS.

“Nun soll ich gar von Haus zu Haus
Die losen Blätter alle sammeln.” — GOETHE.



LIFE AND CHARACTER OF AUGUSTINE.

THE formation of the Christian Church in the early ages of its history was a process involving many elements besides Christianity proper, as represented in the Gospels.

Jewish cabalism, Greek and Roman polytheism, Alexandrian mysticism, Persian dualism, Indian gymnosophism, are among the confluent streams which emptied their tributary streams into this providential river, and became coefficients of a faith whose triumphs are owing in part to its having appropriated all that was vital in foregone and contemporary creeds and rites.

And not only did the Church inoculate itself with ideas from without; it also absorbed into its system and transubstantiated into its own kind, by "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," the blood and temper of many climes. The dreaming Oriental, the volatile Greek, the practical Roman, the impetuous Goth, the fiery African, are all represented in its organism.

To the last-named country the Church is indebted for three, at least, of its greater lights,—Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine. The first distinguished by his moral purism; the second by his stout defence of Episcopal authority; the third by his theology and his great example.

Saint Augustine, whose life and character I now propose to discuss, has become identified with an influence far exceeding that of his compatriots, and coextensive with the Christian Church. The morals of Christendom refused to adopt the stern requirements of the eloquent Montanist; its ecclesiastical polity soon transcended the views of the fervid Carthaginian. But the doctrine of the Bishop of Hippo has survived the decline of the Papacy; has reproduced itself in the formularies of Protestantism; has been transplanted from the Old World to the New by the fostering care of the Puritans, and constitutes to this day the staple of American theology. Since the days of the Apostles no Christian ecclesiastic has exerted such sway or obtained such following.

Externally, the life of Saint Augustine was less eventful than those of most men of note in his time,—that maelstrom of history, which tossed individuals and nations like foam-flakes in its boiling eddies. The deep interior being of the man was very imperfectly expressed in his fortunes,

and had no correspondent developments in his external history. He was one of those whose life is a continual drawing from the circumference to the centre.

Tagaste, an obscure corner in the north of Africa, not far from the site of old Carthage, is illustrated by the birth of the greatest of the Fathers. Its historic insignificance, although mentioned by Pliny, excludes it from the ancient maps. Cellarius, the most faithful of geographers, ignores it; French soldiers under General Randon, in 1844,¹ for the first time, perhaps, since the Vandals, uncover its site; and Spruner, the latest authority, has noted its locality in that part of what is now Algeria, where Algiers and Tunis join. The 13th November, 354, is the date of his birth. Cast amid humble conditions, the greatest of earthly blessings was vouchsafed to his childhood,—a pious mother, whose dearest wish was to see the son of her affections safely folded in the bosom of the Catholic Church. Her life was breathed in prayers for this end; and the strongest human influence which Augustine experienced was the prayers of Monica. Gratefully conscious of her agency in securing so able a defender of the faith, the Church has raised to “sainted seats” the “Elect Lady,” whom filial

¹ Poujoulat: *Histoire de Saint Augustin*.

gratitude had already canonized. Few worthies in the Christian calendar have earned more dearly their title to be there. The name of Monica suggests the impersonation of all feminine and Christian graces. We figure to ourselves a form and face such as the Pre-Raphaelites would have loved to paint, with as much of spirit as flesh and blood can take up, and as little of flesh and blood as an earth-inhabiting spirit can make itself visible by. With a brute of a husband, passionate at home and unfaithful abroad, and three children, of whom at least one gifted but turbulent boy was a source of ceaseless anxiety; with a feeble body and a sensitive spirit; with small means and large requirements; with little wit, great cares, and, as her conscientious nature conceived them, awful responsibilities,—the burdened soul had fainted within her unless she had “believed to see the goodness of the Lord.” But she believed, and did not faint. She administered with untiring diligence her arduous economy, and tended her little flock, and still clung to the horns of the altar. She encountered her stormy husband with gentleness for wrath, and soft persuasion for ingratitude and sin. She waited and wept, and hoped and suffered, and still hoped. The substance of her life was sorrow, and the form of it was prayer; the spirit of it love, and the strength of it patience,

and the grace of it meekness. Hers was the pure soul which an elder poet compares to a "drop of Orient dew," which, lighting on a flower,

"Scarce touching where it lies,
But gazing back upon the skies,
Shines with a mournful light

Till the warm sun pities its pain,
And to the skies exhales it back again."

Her pious wishes, long deferred, were fulfilled at last. Her husband, who had lived in profession, as in character, a Pagan, solicited and received before his death the regenerating water of Christian baptism. And at last, after thirty long years of watching and weeping, her favorite, Aurelius, with whose second birth, as he tells us, she had travailed more sorely than with his first, was likewise united to Christ through the baptism of the Catholic Church. Her mission was accomplished when this son of her tears, disengaged from the enemy's tares, and bound in a fair church-sheaf, was now at length fit for the garden of the Lord, — a consummation to which (unconsciously to herself and to him) she had contributed more than all the persuasions of Ambrose, and all the refinements of his own dialectic mind.

O woman, great is thy faith! O loving, sad, and patient Monica; long suffering, late rewarded!

Who more entitled than thou to sit in sainted seats? Who more than thou ever strove and prayed? Who has so nobly illustrated the mediatorial office of woman, showing how, as it is written,

“The ever womanly
Draweth us on?”

Young Augustine mixed at school and at play with the boys of Tagaste; and, if eminent at all among his companions, was not distinguished by any saintly tendencies. The saint in him was latent, dormant; the boy was patent, and wide awake.

The boy loved play, and found study a weariness of the flesh. Greek was his aversion; the circus and the theatre his delight. A sportive boyhood might not portend any lack of manly virtue. Of graver import are the fibbing and thieving which those “Confessions” of his reveal. All this he repents in after years with a penitence almost morbid, and scarcely consistent with the Augustinian theory of human nature, which, by denying to man, unrenewed by superadded and exotic grace, not only goodness, but the faculty of goodness, might seem to preclude all occasion of remorse. With especial compunction he recalls the robbery of a pear-tree, committed in a spirit of juvenile frolic, with some of his associates. In

the excess of his self-condemnation he refines upon his guilt, and, dissecting the act with retrospective analysis, finds more of evil in the heart of it than appears on the face. Why should he steal his neighbor's pears? He had better pears of his own at home. It could not have been for the sake of the fruit, which was not eaten. It must, therefore, have been the love of sin as such,—the mere delight in evil,—which prompted the act.

“Behold my heart, O God! let my heart tell thee what it sought when gratuitously evil, having no temptation to ill but the ill itself. . . . What, then, did wretched I so love in thee, thou theft of mine, thou deed of darkness? . . . Fair were those pears; but not them did my wretched soul desire. For I had store of better, and I gathered them only that I might steal. For when I gathered them I flung them away; my only feast therein being my own sin, which I was pleased to enjoy. For if aught of those pears came within my mouth, what sweetened it was sin.”

We cite the passage as equally characteristic of the boy and the man: the act itself, of the boy; the reflection upon it, of the man. The boy, headlong, impetuous, thoughtless, vicious: the man, regenerate, holy, God-seeking, but self-dissecting, morbid. A healthy feeling would have wrought a more perfect self-forgiveness. A healthy judgment would distinguish between youthful love of

fun indulged to vicious excess, and love of evil as such.

There is in all men something immovable and immutable,—an individuality common to the child, to the youth, and the man,—a backbone of the character which remains unaltered through all the revolutions that sweep over the heart and through all the vicissitudes of life. We may change our opinions, our habits, our pursuits, our tastes; we may change from heedless to earnest, from sensual to moral, from godless to devout: but we cannot change the radical innermost self. We bear not the root, but the root us. Religion may alter the expression of the character, but not the type; may convert the worldling into a saint, but not one individual into another. There is a ground which survives through all the metamorphoses of nature and of grace. As it was in childhood, it remains in old age; as birth delivered it to this world, death will hand it over to the next. We find in Augustine the child one quality, at least, which especially distinguishes Augustine the man,—ambition. The same passion, which, sanctified by heavenly grace, engendered the pure and noble aspirations of his riper years, inspired also the literary labors of his youth, and was manifest even in the boy, in scorn of inferiority, in love of boyish distinction, in eager efforts to excel in

games; for which end, as he tells us, he often had recourse to trickery and deceit. Ambition is a quality indifferent in itself. Its character depends on the qualities with which it is associated; on the course it adopts; the direction given it; the objects at which it aims. Side by side with this quality in Augustine there was early developed a principle of life by which it was refined and ennobled, and consecrated to the highest ends. That principle was love of God — or not so much love, at present, as a certain vague desire and aspiration — the dawn of that future passionate striving and longing after God which breathes from every page of the “*Confessions*,” and which, after his conversion, expressed itself in all the tenor of his life. If ever a human soul, in the words of the Psalmist, panted after God, the soul of Augustine did surely so pant. From earliest childhood, when his only petition was to be saved from chastisement at school, through all the aberrations of his youth, the idea of God was familiar to his thoughts, and the want of God was the secret of his heart. Many a devout soul has found its private experience expressed by him in those words, often echoed and often imitated, — words which a well-known Moravian hymn has fitly paraphrased, — “*Inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.*”

“ My heart is pained ; nor can it be
At rest till it finds rest in Thee.”

On one occasion, while yet a child, when sudden illness threatened his life, he expressed a desire to be baptized. The necessary arrangements were made ; but the danger passed, and his mother deferred the salutary rite, thinking, he says, “ the defilements of sin would, after that washing, bring greater and more perilous guilt.” This too subjective view of baptism he condemns.

“ Why does it still echo in our ears on all sides : ‘ Let him alone—let him do as he will ; for he is not yet baptized ’ ? But in the matter of bodily health no one says, Let him continue to be wounded, for he is not yet healed. How much better, then, I had been healed at once.”

At school, in the neighboring city of Madaura, he distinguished himself by his proficiency. His childish impatience of mental labor had already begun to yield to the rising visions and dawning promise of the intellectual world. He returned to Tagaste, and remained a year in his father’s house, preparatory to entering the university at Carthage. It was his sixteenth year,—equivalent to the twentieth of colder climes. At this early period of his life he began to plunge, without reserve, into sensual pleasures, and suffered all the billows of lust and passion to go over his soul.

His father died; and with him the means of collegiate education would have failed, had not the liberality of a friend of the family supplied the defect. He went to Carthage,—the chief university of Africa,—and there devoted himself, with all the ardor which a passionate thirst for knowledge could inspire in such a nature, to various branches of letters and science; above all, to the study of rhetoric.

The high schools of learning are seldom schools of morality. It is oftener folly than wisdom which gives the tone to society where young men are thrown together, without the restraint of their natural guardians, and away from the influence of home. The ancient universities seem not to have differed in this respect from those of modern time. Life at Carthage was the same thing as life at Heidelberg, or Halle, or Oxford, or other academic cities of modern Europe, not to speak of institutions nearer home. Augustine, with whom love of pleasure was second only to love of knowledge, was not likely to mend his manners among the turbulent youths assembled there.

The vicious indulgences commenced at Tagaste were continued on a larger scale, with no other check than the intellectual life which now developed itself with ever-increasing intensity. He became a member of the noisiest of college

clubs,—one of those associations which universities often develop, under one or another name,—a club which rejoiced in the name of “The Destructives.” Its character is sufficiently indicated by that appellation. Augustine joined these rioters more for the sake of popularity and the dashing renown which, in such communities, attaches to such a life, than for any sincere enjoyment they afforded him. His better soul recoiled from their orgies and the graceless associates with whom they connected him. He appears to have freed himself soon, entirely or in part, from this sordid communion.

As a refuge from coarser diversion, he frequented the theatre, where the enjoyment, if equally empty, was more sedate. In after life he criticises this passion for theatrical amusement in that half-querulous, half-argumentative tone which characterizes so much of the “Confessions.”

“Stage-plays also carried me away, full of images of my miseries and of fuel to my fire. Why is it that man desires to be made sad, beholding doleful and tragic things, which yet he himself would by no means suffer? . . . I, miserable, then, loved to grieve, and sought out what to grieve at; and that acting best pleased me and attracted me most vehemently which drew tears from me. What wonder that, a lost sheep straying from thy flock, and impatient of thy keeping, I became infected with disease?”

It was during his residence at Carthage that Augustine connected himself with the sect of the Manicheans,—a flourishing heresy of early Christendom, and one which then divided with the Arians the contempt and abhorrence of the Catholic Church. For even at that early period the Catholic Church was a powerful and compact body amid the formations of the Christian world. For a century past it had been shaping its doctrine, defining its position, and eliminating all that would not conform to its tests. The moment Christianity began to cool, like the igneous vapor of which it is supposed that the worlds were formed, it began to part and divide. The several fragments formed themselves into separate bodies, or *isms*, and the principal fragment called itself catholic, apostolic, and assumed peculiar and divine authority. Not to be a Catholic, in the judgment of this Church, was not to be a Christian. To be out of the pale of that organization was to be out of the fold of Christ. When, therefore, the good Monica learned that her son had joined the ranks of a sect, she mourned over him with a sorrow far exceeding anything she had hitherto suffered on his account. All his previous aberrations and excesses seemed to her trivial compared with this act of revolt, as she deemed it, against the authority of the Church. She argued — not unreasonably

from her point of view — that heresy was worse than irreligion; that the soul of her child was more imperiled, his chance of salvation more seriously impaired, by false doctrine than by unbelief. So many an orthodox mother in these days would rather her child should be without faith and without any tincture of religious life, and confess no Christ and know no God, than adopt the views of another sect. And if Christianity were a system of dogmas instead of a dispensation of grace and truth; if salvation were the product of opinion, and the form of faith more essential than the fact of faith, — then, certainly, a state of indifference and unbelief would be preferable to a Christian confession without the pale of orthodoxy, because more receptive; as a vacuum is more receptive than a solid, and a fallow field a better condition for the planter than a forest. The mothers are right from their point of view. Their error lies in connecting salvation with opinion, and in limiting the grace of God to certain confessions. Yet, even here, in its very exclusiveness, the early Church seems to have been guided by divine instinct, and followed unconsciously the leading of that Spirit whose organ it was, and whose foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. The student of history must see that Christianity, — *i. e.*, the principle of divine life

introduced into the world by Jesus Christ,— could not have survived the agony of time, the storm and rack which followed the dismemberment of the Roman Empire; could never have descended to us; that it must have been dissipated, if not extinguished, in the flood of Gothic migrations,— had it not been committed to a compact, vigorous body, able to resist and retain. What the Church then wanted was strength— organic strength; and that it could not have without exclusiveness. Although in the formation of it many foreign elements, as I have said, were embodied, it had need to define itself sharply against the unlimited and unconditional influx of ideas and beliefs from without, in order to preserve its identity and to perfect its strength. It had to be exclusive to maintain its own. It could not be liberal without being loose, and in constant danger of dissolution. A strong body must have a sharp and rigorous outline. That which does not withstand, says Coleridge, cannot stand.

The Manichees professed to be Christians. But with this profession they incorporated a system of philosophy derived from Manes or Mani, a Persian philosopher of the third century, who claimed to be the Paraclete, or “Comforter” promised by Christ to his disciples. It would lead us too far from our theme to attempt so much as an

outline of that philosophy. Its distinguishing feature, characteristic of Persian thought, was dualism. That is, in addition to a self-existent, eternal Good, — the God of the Christians, — it maintained a self-existent, eternal Evil. This Evil is embodied in matter, identical with it; but still an active agent, a Prince of Darkness, forever warring against the Good. The Manichees carried this dualism into human nature. They held that man has two souls, — a good and an evil; the one the offspring of God, the other the child of the Devil. The system, in short, is the Magian or Zoroastrian doctrine, modified by Christian ideas. Its details are curious, combining much that is significant and much that is sublime, with puerile vagaries, grotesque conceits, and intolerable platitudes. If we separate what is purely theological in it from the ontological and anthropological fantasies in which it is imbedded, we shall find it perhaps as near to the mark of gospel truth as Augustinian Christianity. Its moral code was rigorous to a fault; so rigorous that only a portion of those who received the doctrine of Manes were able to comply with it. Accordingly, there were two classes of Manicheans, — the “Auditors,” to whom greater liberty was allowed in practice than the canon allowed in theory; and the “Elect,” who constituted a

higher grade, and were bound to a stricter life. The latter were required to mortify the flesh in all directions. They ate no animal food, and drank no wine, subsisted on herbs and fruits, and often fasted entirely. They lived celibate, in rigorous sexual seclusion. They held no property, but renounced whatever they possessed on entering the order, and, wedded to lifelong poverty, were supported entirely by eleemosynary aid. The life even of the Auditors was in many respects more strict than that of the Catholics: and so far as the negative part of morality is concerned, appeared to advantage beside that of the Church. The radical vice of the system was its rationalistic character. Whatever of Christian truth there was in it was so plighted and confused with philosophic speculation as to lose entirely the evangelic simplicity and authority which distinguish the original Word from all the fabrics of vain curiosity. It was not a religion, but a speculation; it put theory before gospel, and Manes before Christ.

Monica grieved, even to anger. She could tolerate the libertine, but not the heretic. A bishop whom she consulted on the subject, once himself a Manichean, reassured her. She would have him argue the matter with Aurelius. But the wise man knew better than to grant her request. He

knew how little is gained in such cases by disputation. He bade her take heart, and employ no means but prayer for his conversion. The boy would come right at last. It was impossible that the son of so many tears should be eternally lost. She was further consoled by a vision, which assured her that where she was there her son should be also. Augustine, to whom she related the circumstance, would have put a different interpretation upon it: Monica was to turn Manichean. She indignantly repelled the supposition. "The vision said not that I should be where you are, but that you should be where I am." He was more impressed with the answer than with the vision.

Our saint had now completed his academic course, in which one book, especially, had stirred his soul with profound effect. It was a work of Cicero, now lost, entitled "*Hortensius*,"—a treatise of philosophy, commending not this or that school, but the search after absolute wisdom.

The soul of Augustine was regenerated by it. He refers to it in the "*Confessions*" as the date of a new consciousness,—a marked and decisive moment in his mental being. "This book altered my affections, and turned my prayers to thyself, O Lord, and made me have other purposes and desires. Every vain hope at once became

worthless to me, and I longed, with an incredibly burning desire, for an immortality of wisdom, and began now to arise, that I might return unto thee." One thing he missed in the splendid Roman—the name and idea of Christ. "That name," says his French biographer, "the son of Monica had imbibed from his mother's breast; and across all the tempests of his young heart the name of Jesus Christ had remained, a divine perfume."¹

He embraced the profession of *rhetor*, or public speaker and teacher of the arts of speech. The choice was characteristic. It was that profession of all others which yielded the readiest rewards to ambition. It afforded scope for literary culture, yet brought him continually before the public, and linked him with the living world. No profession, however, is more dangerous to the souls of them that practise it than that of public speaker,—a profession whose success depends on dexterity of tongue, on the turn of a phrase; on plausibility, not wisdom, nor intellectual or moral worth. It endangers that which is most vital in man, and the loss of which is most fatal,—his sincerity. It is not a favorable indication of the state of the Roman Empire at that time that the public speaker had grown into such repute; that

¹ Poujoulat.

the calling of the rhetor had become so generally popular; that the grave, old, taciturn Roman had grown loquacious. "Given," says Carlyle, "a general insincerity of mind for several generations, you will certainly find the talker established in the place of honor, and the doer hidden in the obscure crowd. All men devoutly prostrate, worshipping the eloquent talker, and no man knows what a scandalous idol he is; out of whom, in the mildest manner, like comfortable, natural rest, comes mere asphyxia and death everlasting. Probably there is not in nature a more distracted phantasm than your commonplace, eloquent speaker."

Augustine himself, in after years, appears to have taken this view of his profession, which he satirizes with an irony as bitter as Carlyle himself could wish: "In those days I taught rhetoric, and, overcome by cupidity, made sale of loquacity. . . . And Thou, Lord, from afar perceivedst me stumbling in that slippery course, amid much smoke, emitting some sparks of faithfulness."

As rhetor, then, behold him established in his native city of Tagaste, and occupying with good success that slippery path; not a mere talker, indeed, but a teacher of talk.

In his twenty-second year, young, lively, enthusiastic, at once a glowing idealist, a dreamer of

romantic dreams, and a gay, gallant, polished man of the world, he was just the person to attract pupils, and bind them to him with passionate devotion.

And he did attract them. His lifelong connection with his friend and pupil Alypius began at the lecture-room in Tagaste.

The school flourished, the rhetor prospered; but a great affliction now befell him, and embittered his brief success. A beloved friend, a companion of his boyhood, bound to him by affinity of tastes and pursuits, by early association and all that nourishes youthful friendship, was struck down by death. In the insensibility of a fever they had administered to him the rite of baptism. Augustine, who had been converting him to Manicheism, made sport of the ceremony. But his friend, in a lucid interval, with an independence he had never before exhibited, bade him forbear. It was no Manichean speculation that could comfort him in that extreme. And so he died in the simple faith of the Church. The soul of Augustine was dissolved in boundless sorrow. "My heart," he says, "was utterly darkened, and whatever I beheld was death. My birthplace was a torment to me, and my father's house a strange unhappiness." He lived to repent this inordinate grief; and in one of the most eloquent passages

of his autobiography condemns the love which cleaves to the finite with such mad devotion. No English version can do justice to the terseness of the original,—a terseness of which only the Latin is capable. “Happy he who loves thee, and the friend in thee, and the enemy because of thee. He alone loses no dear one, to whom all are dear in Him who is never lost. And who is he but our God,—the God that made heaven and earth, and who fills them by the act of creation. Thee no one loses but he who dismisses thee. And he who dismisses thee, whither can he go, or whither flee, but from thee complacent to thee irate?”

The city was a desert in which this void had opened and where this shadow lay. He removed to Carthage, where a wider and richer field was open to his ambition. He had already attained to public honors, had contended for literary prizes, and received “agonistic garlands” from “proconsular hands.” He now, in his twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh year, composed a work on the Beautiful and the Fit,—“I think two or three books. Thou knowest how many, O Lord, for it is gone from me, I know not how.” His life at this period was devoted to study — indefatigable in its assiduity and wide in its range, but probably more discursive than profound. Yet he

boasts, with a good deal of complacency, to God, of having mastered Aristotle's predicaments without teacher or guide. Meanwhile his own predicaments, what with the ill-manners of Carthaginian youths and the unquenchable fire in his bosom, were getting daily more intolerable, and finally drove him from Carthage across the sea to the fore-appointed goal of his spiritual quest.

There was one name which must, in those days, have filled the provincial mind with wonder and longing above all others. Rome, even then, with Byzantium for the capital of the East, and Milan the seat of the Augusti of the West, was still a synonyme for empire. It was still a name which outweighed the world, comprising more and greater memories than any secular name that was named of men. It was still the *urbs κατ' ἐξοχήν*. Whoever uttered it enunciated in one word a thousand years of power and glory. Our rhetor was not insensible to these attractions. The world's metropolis drew him to new and nobler triumphs; and, revolving his future course, like Saint Paul, he concluded within himself: "I must also see Rome." The difficulty was in escaping from Monica, who vehemently opposed his design; but, if he would go, insisted on accompanying him. She feared to trust him away in the wide, wicked, Manichean world, where "grievous wolves" lay in

wait to devour him. She had followed him to the sea-shore, suspecting his intent. But he persuaded her to pass the time in a neighboring chapel, while he waited the embarkation of a friend who was to sail with the midnight breeze. She spent the night in prayer that he might stay; and all the while his vessel was cleaving the seas on the wings of the southwest. And when morning dawned there lay some leagues of Mediterranean waves between mother and son: he to her a speck on the blue waste; she to him a cloud in the horizon. It was deftly, but not well done. "And I lied to my mother (and such a mother!), and escaped. For this, also, thou hast mercifully forgiven me, preserving me, thus full of execrable defilements, from the sea, for the waters of thy grace."

His stay in Rome was brief, and embittered by sickness of body as well as the old unrest. His professional success was marred by the graceless habit which the Roman students had, of quitting the classes before the end of the course, leaving the tuition-fees unpaid. "These also," he says pathetically, "my heart hated." When, therefore, the prefect of the city was applied to by the authorities of Milan to send them a rhetorician at the public cost, Augustine petitioned for the post, and obtained it through the influence of Manichean friends. To Milan he went, unconscious of the

good which awaited him there, in that city of his new birth,—the native city of his inner-man,—where, out of the body of death, the soul was to lift itself into newness of life. His mother now joined him, having braved all the perils of the way, that she might, if possible, interpose her influence between him and perils more dreaded than those of land or sea.

His state of mind at this period was one of predominant scepticism. He despaired of finding the absolute truth. His faith in Manicheism had long been shaken by the inability of its teachers, and especially of the celebrated Faustus, whom he had encountered at Carthage, to resolve the objections which had arisen in his mind respecting some parts of the system. But no new doctrine had yet replaced that system in his belief. Platonism,—or rather the modification of it by the New Academy which had had such influence on the Greek Fathers, and through them on the early Church—took possession of his mind, and kindled there, as he says, an incredible glow (*incredibile incendium*); but without satisfying his heart, which craved, unknown to himself, a religion instead of philosophy, and authority instead of speculation. He was just in the state to receive the impression of a nature more powerful than any he had yet been subjected to.

The bishopric of Milan was at this time vested in a man whose praise was in all the churches of the West, — a man who combined in beautiful harmony the spiritual potentate with the tender shepherd; the practical counsellor, worldly-wise, with the holy man of God; the liturgical artist with the faithful preacher, — a man who could rebuke emperors and comfort poor old women as well, — the fancy-type of the true ecclesiastic. What August-dried fields are to September showers, the soul of Augustine was to the preaching of Ambrosius, whose very name seemed a happy pre-sage of immortal food. The first effect of this prelate's discourses was to open to him the Scriptures. On the Old Testament especially, which to Augustīne had always been a sealed book, it poured a flood of light, interpreting typically those passages which had been most repulsive to his taste, — with a liberal disregard, it must be confessed, of the literal import. He began the study of Paul's Epistles; which, though never entirely comprehended, filled his whole soul, displacing the sages of Alexandria. His mind was now set in the direction of the Catholic Church. But a great moral gulf remained to be overcome, and a moral revolution to be accomplished, before he could attain to reconciliation with God in Christ. He was still far estranged from God by

abhorrent desires and averted life. He was practically an eudæmonist, given to sensual pleasures to such a degree that only, he confesses, the fear of a judgment to come, implanted in his childhood, restrained him from the vilest excesses. The Epicurean philosophy, as a practical system, was the one he would prefer, could he only ignore a future retribution.

The slave of libidinous passion, honestly desiring to shake off that yoke, he turned his thoughts to marriage as a way to escape. His mother, who also saw in wedlock a refuge from lawless indulgence, seconded his views on this subject with great eagerness, and joyfully took upon herself the task of discovering an eligible match. The undertaking proved less easy than her alacrity had figured it. The fastidious exigence of Augustine had embarrassed it with hard conditions. Monica thought him, as we say, "too particular." He denied the charge. He did not expect perfection, but he never could think of marrying a woman who did not at least possess these four qualifications: 1st, she must be beautiful; 2d, good-tempered; 3d, cultivated; 4th, she must have property. These were his four "predicaments," as rigorously determined as Aristotle's ten. The number of females in whom these four conditions could be united, was limited. But after much

seeking, and inquiring, and advertising, to the effect that "a teacher of rhetoric, recently from Carthage, aged thirty, intending to marry, would receive proposals," a damsel was found whom mother and son agreed in thinking an unexceptionable party, but whose friends, considering her extreme youth, exacted a space of two years before they would give her in marriage. Meanwhile he dismissed the mother of his son Adeodatus, between whom and himself an unritual connection had subsisted for twelve or thirteen years, and who had accompanied him from Carthage. The unhappy woman, who loved him with devoted affection, was sent back, like Hagar, to Africa, only, as it shamefully turned out, to make room for another similar connection pending the intended marriage. The blackest spot in Augustine's history is this passage. But the time was at hand when the grace of God was to triumph over lust and passion in that sin-bound soul.

We come to the story of Augustine's conversion. From the time of his arrival in Milan many consenting influences had tended to that result. The way was prepared. His moral sense had been roused ; his conscience convicted of sin ; his heart desired the needed change ; he longed to be delivered from the bondage of corruption. To will was present ; but how to perform that which is good

was not yet found. "For as the needle of a compass," says Taylor, "when it is directed to its beloved star, at the first addresses wavers on either side, and seems indifferent in its courtship of the rising or declining sun, and when it seems first determined to the north, stands awhile trembling, as if it suffered inconvenience in the fruition of its desires, and stands not still in full enjoyment till after, first a great variety of motions, and then an undisturbed posture, — so is the piety and so is the conversion of a man wrought by degrees and several steps of imperfection. At first our choices are wavering, convinced by the grace of God, and yet not persuaded, and then persuaded, but not resolved, and then resolved, but deferring to begin." It needed an impulse from without to polarize the wavering will, and precipitate the new creation. That impulse came, as it often does, in the carriage of a trifling occasion. He was sitting in deep dejection with his friend Alypius, whose interior state resembled his own. A countryman of theirs, Pontitianus, an officer of rank in the army and a zealous Christian, entered the room, and was surprised at seeing on the table, instead of some classic or Manichean author, a copy of Paul's Epistles. He began a religious conversation, in the course of which he told of Anthony, the eremite, who had followed literally the command of Christ

to the rich young man, to sell all that he had and give to the poor, and then to follow him ; also of two friends of his, on the eve of marriage, who, reading the story of that sacrifice, had renounced their betrothed and given themselves to God.

Augustine received the narration as an admonition to himself ; and when their friend was departed, he exclaimed to Alypius : “ What suffer we ? What is this ? Do you hear ? The unlearned arise, and take the kingdom of heaven by force ; and we, with our heartless learning, behold we wallow in flesh and blood ! Are we ashamed to follow, because they preceded, and not ashamed *not* to follow at least ? ” He seized the volume of Paul’s Epistles and rushed into the garden adjoining the house. “ I raved in my spirit,” he says, “ indignant, with stormiest indignation, that I did not enter into thy will and covenant, O my God, though all my bones cried aloud to me to enter. But thither goes no one with chariots, or with ships, or with feet. . . . To go thither, and to arrive there, is nothing else but to will to go ; but to will it bravely and wholly. . . . And thou, Lord, didst stand by me in my hidden parts, with severe pity and duplicated lashes of fear and shame, that I might not relapse, and the feeble and slender cord be broken that yet remained, but recover strength and more strongly bind me.

And I said to myself, Do it now! Do it now! And while I spoke I all but entered into thy will. I almost did it, and did it not. And still I struggled. And there wanted but little, and I was there; and a little less. Now, now, I could touch — I could lay hold. And I was not there, and I did not touch, nor lay hold; hesitating to die unto death and to live unto life.” So raged the conflict in Augustine’s breast. At one time his pleasant vices plucked him by his “fleshly garment,” and asked him if he meant to abandon them forever; if after that moment he would never more know pleasure. Then again the “chaste dignity of continence” beckoned, and showed him multitudes of youths and maidens and people of every age who had lived a pure and virgin life. That continence, “not sterile, but fruitful mother of joy, — children begotten of thee, Lord, her spouse.” “Why standest thou on thyself,” she said, “and findest no footing? Throw thyself upon him, and fear not; he will not stand from under, and let thee fall.” And still he hesitated. He turned his eye inward, and shuddered as he looked, through the rifts of passion, down into the unsunned depths of his breast — into hideous gulfs of bottomless guile — into weltering abysses of insatiate lust, and saw the hells opened — hell underneath hell — in his darkling, selfish heart. Then, by contrast,

came glimpses of the Christian's heaven. He saw, in the jewelled splendor of its mystic foundations, the golden city, and the nations of them that are saved, walking in the light of it, and the river of life ever welling. He heard the Spirit and the Bride say "Come!" and he felt that it needed but an effort of the will to obey the call, to come and take up his everlasting rest. And when he found himself incapable of that effort, still cleaving to the flesh, a tempest of despair broke loose in his soul, and gushed in fierce torrents from his eyes. He cast himself on the ground in the utter abandonment of helpless woe. It was the death-agony of the carnal will, dying to self and sin. And he lay as one dead, his only last thought: "Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?"

"*Tolle, lege! Tolle, lege!*" "Take and read!" sang the voice of a child at play in some neighboring house. Like a call from heaven, it struck the ear of the prostrate penitent. "Take and read!" Yes! he will read. In the Scripture help may be found. For what else was Scripture given, but to succor such as he? He unrolled the codex which lay by his side, — the Epistles of Paul, in the Latin version, — and resolved that the words on which his eye first lighted should decide his purpose and determine his destiny. They were these: "Put

ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in your desires.”¹ He found the passage providentially adapted to his condition. With awe he perceived that God had spoken to his soul. And he, that was in the grave, heard his voice, and came forth unto the resurrection of life. The old man had dropped from him like grave-clothes; corruptible had put on incorruption. He stood there a new creation — his purpose irrevocably fixed — his will subdued by victorious grace; and now, through grace, victorious. The needle was turned to its beloved star, and suffered no “inconvenience in the fruition of its desires.” The moral nature, self-determined with elective polarity, pointed Godward, its axis parallel with that of the moral creation — the law of liberty.

His purpose of marriage was abandoned; he resolved to live celibate: for so the ascetic spirit of the time required that all should live who would follow Christ to the uttermost with practical obedience. He renounced his profession and withdrew from public life, intending to devote himself to theological studies and the service of Christian truth. He was now thirty-two years of age; and, if spared to complete the normal term of human existence, might look forward to many years of profitable labor.

¹ According to the Vulgate.

Seldom has a man at that period of life had such a future unrolled before him. Never did man more nobly redeem the promise of his future with his life and works.

The space I have occupied with the forming period in Augustine's history precludes a full exhibition of his ecclesiastical, episcopal life, and leaves but little room for a critical estimate of the author, the theologian, and the man. To complete the biographical outline, the following data must suffice. The interval between his conversion and his baptism, spent partly at Cassiciacum, — the country-seat of a friend, — and partly at Milan, was given to philosophic and literary labors, and produced the treatise "*Contra Academicos*," directed against the sceptics of the Neoplatonic school; with several other works, of minor importance, on grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, music, and immortality, — of which the last two only were completed and have survived. If these writings possess but little philosophical value, they show at least the prodigious intellectual uberty of the man. It seems to have been his desire, before entering the Church, to wind up his accounts with secular philosophy, and to gather and preserve the fruits of his past intellectual life. At the Easter celebration in 387 he received from Ambrose the waters of baptism, and was made a member of

the body of Christ. He soon after departed, with his mother and son, for Africa. At Ostia, on the way, Monica died. "For one thing only have I wished to live," said she in her last moments, "that I might see thee a Catholic Christian. God hath blessed me beyond measure in this. Why should I yet linger?" With this event terminates the historical part of the "Confessions," published in the year 400. For what else we know of Augustine we are chiefly indebted to his friend Possidius.

After the death of his mother he spent some months in Rome, where he wrote two works against the Manicheans. In the autumn of 388 he returned to Africa, to his native Tagaste, sold the property inherited from his father, and gave the proceeds to the poor; reserving only so much as might suffice for the bare necessities of life. Here he lived three years with his friends Alypius and Evodius, acquired great reputation for his sanctity and wisdom, and wrote various works,—polemic, dogmatic, philosophic. In 392 he was called to the office of presbyter at Hippo Regius, the modern Bona; and in 395, in his forty-first or forty-second year, on the death of Valerius, the former incumbent, he was appointed bishop of that see,—an office which he held until his death, displaying in it all the executive ability required of Christian bishops in an age when the

bishop, like Melchizedec, united, in one office, monarch and priest, and when the destinies of society and the future of humanity were committed chiefly to the shepherd-kings of young Christendom. With the dignity and power of a sovereign, he lived the life almost of a pauper, so simple his habits, so abstemious his vegetable fare. He was virtually bishop, not only of Hippo, but of Africa,—in fact, of the entire West; the leading mind of the Latin Church. His activity was directed in part to the inner, organic polity and well-being of the Church, and partly to literary labors; most of all to the refutation and extermination of the heretics who threatened the integrity of its doctrine,—Manicheans, Pelagians, Donatists. Toward the latter especially he exhibited implacable severity; seconding, if not originating, the fierce persecutions of that sect by the Emperor Honorius, and thereby precipitating the calamity which, soon after, overwhelmed the African Church, and finally extirpated Christianity from the very field which he himself had tilled with such success. In 428 came Genseric with his Vandals,—summoned and aided by the vengeful Donatists,—took possession of the land, and laid waste the churches of the Catholic faith. Says Gibbon:—

“The conquest of Africa was facilitated by the active zeal or the secret favor of a domestic faction. The wanton

outrages against the churches and the clergy of which the Vandals were accused, may be fairly imputed to the fanaticism of their allies ; and the intolerant spirit which disgraced the triumph of Christianity contributed to the loss of the most important province of the West."

Hippo Regius was besieged ; but before it fell, the fleshly citadel of its bishop was stormed and carried by the arch-Vandal who spares neither Donatist nor Catholic, heretic nor saint. After a ten days' illness spent in prayer and penance — with the penitential psalms affixed, for convenience, to the wall by his bedside — on the 28th of August, 430, he laid down the burden of his seventy-five years, and passed victorious on from life to life. His vacant bishopric had no successor. Africa fell into the hands of Genseric. That cherished jewel of the Roman Empire, "*speciositas totius terræ florentis*," sparkled a while in the diadem of the Vandal. A century passed ; Belisarius seized and set it in the crown of Justinian. Another century, and Omar mounted it in the ring of the caliphate. The Greek supplanted the Vandal, the Saracen supplanted the Greek ; Africa was blotted out from the map of Christendom. But Christian Africa had produced one fruit, whose fragrance escaped the desolations of the sword, and whose seed has survived the dissolutions of time. In Moorish Bona, to this

day, the memory of Augustine endures, as that of the Gheber saint who taught the religion of the Son of Mary before the birth of Mohammed. In many a New England Sunday-school, to this day, the unconscious catechumen receives, from his Orthodox Catechism, the hereditary burden of Augustinian theology.

As an author and a man of letters, Saint Augustine occupies a place which belongs to no other of the Fathers of the Church. Less learned than Justin Martyr or Gregory of Nazianzen among the Greeks, than Jerome among the Latins; less profound than Origen; less forcible than Chrysostom, and not more eloquent than Lactantius, — he is yet the only one of them all who has acquired an extra-ecclesiastical reputation, the only one who is anything more than a name to the common run of educated laity, who possesses a literary fame independent of Church authority or calendar renown. As an author he is characterized, first of all, by immense fecundity. Setting aside the quality of his writings, in the mere matter of uberty he ranks among the wonders in that kind, and may be classed with Lope de Vega, Voltaire, G. P. R. James, and other monsters of the pen. One shudders at the sight of those ponderous six folios, which yet do not contain all his writings. Some have been recently

added to the number by Cardinal Mai from the unpublished manuscripts of the Vatican.¹ Others, it is said, remain to be added. Possidius speaks of a thousand and thirty essays; but confesses that all were not known to him. It would seem to be the work of a life only to read what that enterprising pen has traced. In fact the reading might prove perhaps the more difficult task of the two.

Böhringer divides these productions into nine classes,—philosophic, apologetic, polemic, dogmatic, exegetic, ascetic, homiletic, autobiographic, and the *Retractions*.

For the general reader, the “*Confessions*,” the “*Meditations and Soliloquies*,” and the “*City of God*,” are the most attractive, and perhaps the most important, as revealing — especially the two former — the interior life of the man. The “*City of God*” belongs to the class apologetic. This most celebrated of Augustine’s works deserves particular notice. Its aim was to vindicate the Christian Church against the accusations of pagan conservatives, who ascribed the calamities which had come upon the Roman Empire to the dereliction of the ancient faith. It was early in the fifth century that Alaric swept the land with his devastating hosts. The city of Rome had felt the sharpness

¹ Schaff.

of the Gothic sword, and suffered such spoiling as never before since the Gallic invasion in the time of Camillus. The heathen mind imputed these disasters to vacant temples and forbidden rites, with which Christian emperors and a recreant people had offended the tutelary *numina* of ancient Rome, Saint Augustine rebuts the charge, commemorates the evils experienced by the Romans before the introduction of Christianity, exposes the vices of the old religion; then traces the two great politics or lines of civilization which, since the beginning of the world, have proceeded in parallel developments, — the worldly and the spiritual; the terrene city and the city of God. The latter has ultimated in the Christian Church. The Church of Christ is the City of God, including all the righteous, from Abel downward. This city, at the expiration of the sixth day of human history, then in progress, on the seventh shall put on the heavenly state; the dead being raised, the living transfigured, and all made partakers of one felicity. "This seventh day," he says, "will be our Sabbath, whose end will be no evening, but a Lord's day, as it were an eighth day everlasting. Then we shall rest, and we shall see; we shall see, and we shall love; we shall love, and we shall praise. This is what will be in the end without end. For what other end to us than to reach the kingdom of

which there is no end?" In connection with this design, the work embodies much valuable historic and philosophic knowledge; in fact, is a kind of compendium of philosophy and history, as well as of Christian doctrine. The author concludes with this morally and rhetorically characteristic period:—

"I seem to myself, with the help of God, to have paid the debt of this great work. May they pardon me to whom it is too much, and they to whom it is too little. And let them to whom it is sufficient, in their congratulations thank not me, but God with me. Amen."

As a stylist, Augustine is chiefly distinguished by impetuous fervor. Not the fervor of profound thought, but the fervor of lively passion,—the flashing of that fiery nature which procured for him, in the old pictorial representations, the symbol of the flaming heart. This fascinating warmth conveys at first an impression, or awakens an expectation, of eloquence, which further acquaintance does not fully sustain, and which is frequently marred by an over-curious, artificial diction, abounding in puns, assonances, antitheses, and all sorts of tricks and quibbles, which provoke, at last, the impatient criticism of Lorenzo: "Oh, dear discretion! how his words are suited." The language of devotion in the "*Meditations*" is often striking, and even sublime; but often, too, it degenerates

into puerile conceits and endless repetition of verbal paradoxes. "Thou, Lord, fillest heaven and earth, bearing all things without burden, filling all things without inclusion ; ever acting, yet ever at rest ; gathering, though Thou needest nothing ; seeking, though Thou wantest nothing ; loving without heat ; jealous, although secure ; repenting, and not grieving ; angry, and yet tranquil." And so on, to the end of the chapter. A great reader, he was yet singularly deficient in solid learning. His acquaintance with Greek was so slight that, strange as it may seem, there is reason to doubt if he even read the New Testament in the original. Acute and penetrating, seldom profound, or profound only in sentiment, not in thought ; as a controversialist nimble and adroit, a skilful wrangler, not a powerful logician, — he is often unfair toward his opponents, especially the Manichees, whose philosophy, notwithstanding he was tinctured to the last with its leading idea, he never fully fathomed. When hard pushed he dodges the point at issue, extricates himself with a sophism, or evaporates in a generality. But no weak point in his adversary's case escapes him, and no chance of a home-thrust is ever suffered to go by. When Manes exhorts to repentance, he triumphantly asks the Manichees which soul it is that repents, the good, or the bad ? If the bad,

then it is not bad, seeing that it can repent ; if the good, what need of repentance ? Fancy and understanding, wit and reflection, were more developed in him than the higher faculties of imagination and reason. He saw nothing in the dry light of pure intellect, but everything steeped in passion. As a writer, on the whole, he is subtle, ingenious, captivating, rather than satisfactory or strong.

Augustine's significance in dogmatic theology is so momentous, his agency in the history of Christian dogma so immense, that a separate essay would be needed to exhibit him in this relation. One or two critical suggestions are all that our limits will allow. He was resolutely and rigorously Catholic. Christianity with him was, once for all, identified with the Catholic Church. The idea of a possible Christianity outside of that communion he would not tolerate. Every attempt in that kind he attacked with implacable zeal. Notwithstanding the tenderness professed for the erring in that well-known passage quoted by Locke, he warred against heretics, and especially Donatists, with furious hostility ; and, unhappily, lent the sanction of his great name to swell the black list of Christian persecutors. Starting with the false assumption that truth is something objective, to be appropriated with the understanding or

conquered by the will, and failing to find what he sought in Manes or in Plato, the idea that God must have instituted some infallible method, or repository of truth, first turned his attention to the Catholic Church; and once received into its bosom, so entirely did he surrender himself to its dictates, that he expressly declares he would not believe the gospel itself, except the authority of the Church impelled him to do so. It is worthy of note, that the Catholic Church, while honoring him with a place in her calendar, has not rewarded his devotion to her doctrinal authority with a like devotion to his. Doctrinally, he stands in closer relations with the Protestant Church than with the Catholic, whose prevailing tendency has been Pelagian, and therefore anti-Augustinian. His views of man, of sin, of grace and predestination, ever coldly received and faintly acknowledged by his own communion, did not blossom into popular favor until the Reformers of the sixteenth century revived the African theology.

In spite of his war against the Manichees, he remained to the last unconsciously, but virtually and essentially, Manichean in his theory of human nature. This opinion, which I had formed on a partial acquaintance, I find corroborated by others more deeply versed than myself in his works, though stoutly denied by his biographer

Poujoulat, and denied by himself in his controversy with Julian, who had charged it upon him. His anti-Manicheism had led him to deny the substantiality and self-existence of evil, which he justly defines as privation, not substance. But his doctrine of human nature, converting Paul's rhetoric into logic, substantizes sin, and thus reproduces in altered form the Manichean theory of two natures and souls. What the good and evil principle are in the doctrine of Manes, that nature and grace are in the doctrine of Augustine; nature in man, antecedent to conversion, being wholly and only evil.

The Eastern Church had developed the doctrine of triune divinity; the Western, in the person of the Bishop of Hippo, developed the doctrine of humanity. What Athanasius is to the Christology of the Church, that Augustine is to its anthropology. That system of views which, in substance, was reproduced and rearranged by Calvin in the sixteenth century, and is known to us familiarly as Calvinism, is the doctrine represented by our saint, its earliest systematic expositor, exhibited most fully in the controversy with Pelagius, where we see it contrasted with the opposite system. In this controversy, the imputation of Adam's sin and Christ's sinlessness, predestination, human inability, total depravity, the unnaturalness of goodness,

and the consequent absence of it in all but Catholic Christians, and the consequent damnation of all unbaptized, whether infants or adults, are asserted with undoubting consequence. It is not my purpose to discuss these views, nor is this the place for such discussion. I will only say that the system of Augustine appears to me tainted with two essential defects. The first is its fatal Manicheism. It recognizes but two agents, but two intelligences, in the universe, — God and the Devil. Man disappears, human nature is annihilated. Humanity is not a middle term between those two, but only a medium for the manifestation of God or the Devil. Man unbaptized and unconverted is nature, *i. e.*, evil; man converted and baptized is a manifestation of grace, *i. e.*, God. My other objection to it is that it makes all goodness in man exotic, not native, and thereby destroys the obligation of goodness and impairs our interest in it. Goodness is not the legitimate product of human nature, the fruit which it yields, or should yield, under proper cultivation by divine aid, but something which God, by an arbitrary act, affixes to it, displays in it, or performs upon it, — not natural, but preternatural, or even contranatural. It is something which man has no call to cultivate, because no power to produce.

If only the divine plant, once imported, could

be naturalized and propagate itself in the soil of this world ; if only the tree, once grafted, would continue to produce the heavenly fruit. But no ; every ratable stem in the garden of humanity — every tree which the Lord accepts — is an exotic, a stranger on exhibition, whose very roots, if you examine them, are set in a tub of foreign mould. Every instance of goodness which the Augustinian can allow to be such is an apple of Paradise hung by a thread of grace on a tree of Sodom, and hung there, not to fructify and bless to future generations the surrounding waste, but to make it by contrast more accursed. Grant man as depraved as you will, short of absolute incapacity for good, inherent in his nature and vitiating and transmuting the fundamental constitution of him, so that humanity in its constitutive, radical type, has come to be congenerous with hell ; but grant at least a germ, a capacity, of good. Leave us, at least, the idea of man as a kind distinct from that of devil. Place the action of the Spirit within the plant, and not without it. Make the act of grace to consist in fertilizing the soil, in tilling, showering, grafting (if you please) the tree ; not in eradicating, not in supplanting, not in transferring an abnormal fruit of grace to a graceless stem. If goodness and man belong to each other by destination and design, there must be some normal relation, some

natural affinity, between them. Then the natural man and the spiritual are not distinct in kind, but different epochs of one being, different stages of one life. All which is spiritual in man is natural in its root, and all which is truly natural in man is capable of spiritual fruit.

It is easy to interpret, from his own experience, the views of a man in whom so vast a change had been wrought by grace, and who might seem to himself — contrasting the present with the past — to have become, in his new career, the medium of a spirit not his own. But let us confess that, with all his eminent graces and gifts, there was not in Augustine that calm intuition, that patient deliberation and cautious judgment, which alone can give weight to authority, or certify soundness of opinion in matters of faith. The value of a man's conclusions on one point is rightly estimated by the practical judgment, or want of judgment, which he manifests on others; and who, at this day, can receive with implicit reliance, or receive without grave deductions, the opinions of one who solemnly testifies to numerous miracles, and among them three resurrections from the dead, performed within his knowledge by contact with the tomb of a saint?

If I have seemed in these strictures less than just to the honored Father whose portraiture I have essayed, it is not, I trust, from want of

ability or will to discern and acknowledge his quality and claims; it is not from any want of reverence for the saint or delight in the man. Precious to me, as to any, that great memory. I admire the mighty energy which bore the earthly accidents and name of Augustine. I honor the laborious and unwearied devotion to Christ and the Church which knew no pause and asked no reward but the rest that remaineth for the people of God. I revere the steadfast virtue which, by grace abounding, could trample at once on lusts long indulged, and walk unswerving, in the teeth of such passions, the elected path of ascetic abnegation. To me, as to all Christendom forevermore, the name of Augustine stands for a spiritual fact of holiest import. Had nothing survived of him but the story of his life, that alone would be a heritage of price to the world. The real import of the man, stripped of all accidents, lies in his conversion. A conversion more satisfactory and complete, with such antecedents, on such a level of intellectual life, the annals of religion do not record. Here is a man who was dead and lived again; who, past the bloom and pliancy of life, but still in the heat of its passions and fiercest carnal demands, having lived for thirty years to the flesh, a selfish voluptuary, — on a day, in an hour, turned right about in the path he was treading; and ever after, with

his back to the world and his face toward God, for forty long years, made every day of his life the round of a ladder by which he climbed into glory.

The life which contains that fact, is it not a benediction to all generations? The Church which inscribes that life on her annals, shall she not record it with the prefix of saint? But what then? Because of the saint shall we not see the limitations of the man? Or worse, because of the limitations of the man shall we refuse to acknowledge the saint? A saint he was, if ever mortal deserved that name; but, for all that, a very imperfect man. Humanity is more than any saint, than all saints. It includes them all, it transcends them all. Humanity's calendar is never full; and the holiest in it serve us best when they point to something higher than themselves.

GOTTFRIED WILHELM VON LEIBNIZ.

[From the Atlantic Monthly, June, 1858.]

THE philosophic import of this illustrious name, after suffering temporary eclipse from the Critical Philosophy, with its swift succession of transcendental dynasties, has within the last half century emerged into clear and respectful recognition, if not into broad and effulgent repute. In divers quarters the attention of scholars has reverted to the splendid optimist whose adventurous intellect left nothing unexplored, and almost nothing unexplained.

Voltaire pronounced him "le savant le plus universel de l'Europe ;" but characterized his metaphysical labors with the somewhat equivocal compliment of "métaphysicien assez délié pour vouloir réconcilier la théologie avec la métaphysique."¹

Germany, with all her wealth of erudite celebrities, has produced no other who fulfils so completely the type of the GELEHRTE, — a type which differs from that of the *savant* and from that of the

¹ "On sait que Voltaire n'aimait pas Leibniz. J'imagine que c'est le chrétien qu'il détestait en lui." — CH. WADDINGTON.

scholar, but includes them both. Feuerbach calls him "the personified thirst for Knowledge;" Frederic the Great pronounced him an "Academy of Sciences;" and Fontenelle said of him that "he saw the end of things, or that they had no end." It was an age of intellectual adventure into which Leibniz was born,—fit sequel and heir to the age of maritime adventure which preceded it. We please ourselves with fancied analogies between the two epochs and the nature of their discoveries. In the latter movement, as in the former, Italy took the lead. The martyr Giordano Bruno was the brave Columbus of modern thought,—the first who broke loose from the trammels of mediæval ecclesiastical tradition, and reported a new world beyond the watery waste of scholasticism. Campanella may represent the Vespucci of the new enterprise; Lord Bacon its Sebastian Cabot,—the "*Novum Organum*" being the Newfoundland of modern experimental science. Descartes was the Cortes, or shall we rather say the Ponce de Leon, of scientific discovery, who, failing to find what he sought,—the Principle of Life (the Fountain of Eternal Youth),—yet found enough to render his name immortal and to make mankind his debtor. Spinoza is the spiritual Magalhaens, who, emerging from the straits of Judaism, beheld

"Another ocean's breast immense, unknown."

Of modern thinkers he was

“ the first
That ever burst
Into that silent sea.”

He discovered the Pacific of philosophy, — that theory of the sole Divine Substance, the All-One, which Goethe in early life found so pacifying to his troubled spirit, and which, vague and barren as it proves on nearer acquaintance, induces at first, above all other systems, a sense of repose in illimitable vastness and immutable necessity.

But the Vasco de Gama of his day was Leibniz. His triumphant optimism rounded the Cape of theological Good Hope. He gave the chief impulse to modern intellectual commerce. Full freighted, as he was, with Western thought, he revived the forgotten interest in the Old and Eastern World, and brought the ends of the earth together. Circumnavigator of the realms of mind, wherever he touched he appeared as discoverer, as conqueror, as lawgiver. In mathematics he discovered or invented the Differential Calculus, — the logic of transcendental analysis, the infallible method of astronomy, without which it could never have compassed the large conclusions of the “*Mécanique Céleste*.” In his “*Protogæa*,” published in 1693, he laid the foundation of the science of Geology. From his observations as Superintendent of the

Harz Mines, and those which he made in his subsequent travels through Austria and Italy; from an examination of the layers, in different localities, of the earth's crust, — he deduced the first theory, in the geological sense, which has ever been propounded, of the earth's formation. Orthodox Lutheran as he was, he braved the theological prejudices which then, even more than now, affronted scientific inquiry in that direction. "First among men," says Flourens, "he demonstrated the two agencies which successively have formed and reformed the globe, — fire and water." In the region of metaphysical inquiry he propounded a new and original theory of Substance, and gave to philosophy the Monad, the Law of Continuity, the Pre-established Harmony, and the Best Possible World.

Born at Leipsic in 1646, — left fatherless at the age of six years, — by the care of a pious mother and competent guardians, young Leibniz enjoyed such means of education as Germany afforded at that time, but declares himself, for the most part, self-taught.¹ So genius must always be, for want of any external stimulus equal to its own impulse.

¹ "Duo mihi profuere mirifice (quæ tamen alioqui ambigua, et pluribus noxia esse solent), primum quod fere essem *αὐτοδίδακτος*, alterum quod quærerem nova in unaquaque scientia." — LEIBNIT.: *Opera Philosoph.* (Erdmann, p. 162.)

No normal training could keep pace with his abnormal growth. No school discipline could supply the fuel necessary to feed the consuming fire of that ravenous intellect. Grammars, manuals, compends,—all the apparatus of the classes,—were only oil to its flame. The master of the Nicolai-Schule in Leipsic, his first instructor, was a steady practitioner of the martinet order. The pupils were ranged in classes corresponding to their civil ages—their studies graduated according to the baptismal register. It was not a question of faculty or proficiency, how a lad should be classed and what he should read, but of calendar years. As if a shoemaker should fit his last to the age instead of the foot! Such an age, such a study. Gottfried is a genius, and Hans is a dunce; but Gottfried and Hans were both born in 1646: consequently, now, in 1654, they are both equally fit for the Smaller Catechism. Leibniz was ready for Latin long before the time allotted to that study in the Nicolai-Schule; but the system was inexorable: all access to books cut off by rigorous proscription. But the thirst for knowledge is not easily stifled, and genius, like love, “will find out his way.”

He chanced, in a corner of the house, to light on an odd volume of Livy left there by some student boarder. What could Livy do for a child of eight

years, with no previous knowledge of Latin and no lexicon to interpret between them? For most children, nothing. Not one in a thousand would have dreamed of serious grappling with such a mystery. But the brave Patavinian took pity on our little one, and yielded something to childish importunity. The quaint old copy was garnished, according to a fashion of the time, with rude woodcuts, having explanatory legends underneath. The young philologer tugged at these until he had mastered one or two words. Then the book was thrown by in despair, as impracticable to further investigation. Then, after one or two weeks had elapsed, for want of other employment, it was taken up again, and a little more progress made. And so by degrees, in the course of a year, a considerable knowledge of Latin had been achieved. But when, in the Nicolai order, the time for this study arrived, so far from being pleased to find his instructions anticipated, or welcoming such promise of future greatness; so far from rejoicing in his pupil's proficiency, the pedagogue chafed at the insult offered to his system by this empiric antepast. He was like one who suddenly discovers that he is telling an old story where he thought to surprise with a novelty; or like one who undertakes to fill a lamp, which, being (unknown to him) already full, runs over, and his oil is spilled.

It was “*oleum perdidit*” in another sense than the scholastic one. Complaint was made to the guardians of the orphan Gottfried of these illicit visits to the tree of knowledge. Severe prohibitory measures were recommended ; which, however, judicious counsel from another quarter happily averted.

At the age of eleven, Leibniz records that he made, on one occasion, three hundred Latin verses without elision between breakfast and dinner. A hundred hexameters, or fifty distichs, in a day, is generally considered a fair *pensum* for a boy of sixteen at a German gymnasium.

At the age of seventeen he produced, as an academic exercise, on taking the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy, his celebrated treatise on the Principle of Individuality, “*De Principio Individui*,” — the most extraordinary performance ever achieved by a youth of that age ; remarkable for its erudition, especially its intimate knowledge of the writings of the Schoolmen, and equally remarkable for its vigorous grasp of thought and its subtle analysis. In this essay Leibniz discovered the bent of his mind, and prefigured his future philosophy, in the choice of his theme and in his vivid appreciation and strenuous positing of the individual as the fundamental principle of ontology. He takes Nominalistic ground in relation to the old controversy of Nominalist and Realist, siding with Abelard and

Roscellin and Occam, and against St. Thomas and Duns Scotus. The principle of individuation, he maintains, is the entire entity of the individual, and not mere limitation of the universal, whether by "Existence" or by "*Hæcceity*."¹ John and Thomas are individuals by virtue of their integral humanity, and not by fractional limitation of humanity. Dobbin is an actual positive horse (*Entitas tota*). Not a negation, by limitation, of universal equiety (*Negatio*). Not an individuation, by actual existence, of a non-existent but essential and universal horse (*Existentia*). Nor yet a horse only by limitation of kind, — a horse minus Dick and Bessie and the brown mare, etc. (*Hæcceitas*). But an individual horse, simply by virtue of his equine nature. Only so far as he is an actual complete horse is he an individual at all (*Per quod quid est, per id unum numero est*). His individuality is nothing superadded to his equiety (*Unum supra ens nihil addit reale*). Neither is it anything subtracted therefrom (*Negatio non potest producere accidentia individualia*). In fine, there is and can be no horse but actual individual horses (*Essentia et existentia non possunt separari*).

¹ "Aut enim principium individuationis ponitur *entitas tota*, (1) aut non tota. Non totam aut negatio exprimit, (2) aut aliquid positivum. Positivum aut pars physica est, essentiam terminans, *existentia*, (3) aut metaphysica, speciem terminans, *hæcceitas*. (4) . . . Pono igitur: omne individuum sua tota entitate individuat." — *De Princ. Indiv.* 3 et 4.

This was the doctrine of the Nominalists, as it was of Aristotle before them. It was the doctrine of the Reformers, except, if we remember rightly, of Huss. The University of Leipsie was founded upon it. It is the current doctrine of the present day, and harmonizes well with the current Materialism. Not that Nominalism in itself, and as Leibniz held it, is necessarily materialistic, but Realism is essentially antimaterialistic. The Realists held with Plato, — but not in his name, for they, too, claimed to be Aristotelian, and pre-eminently so, — that the ideal must precede the actual. So far they were right. This was their strong point. Their error lay in claiming for the ideal an objective reality, an independent being. Conceptualism was only another statement of Nominalism, or, at most, a question of the relation of language to thought. It cannot be regarded as a third issue in this controversy, — a controversy in which more time was consumed, says John of Salisbury, “ than the Cæsars required to make themselves masters of the world,” and in which the combatants, having spent at last their whole stock of dialectic ammunition, resorted to carnal weapons, passing suddenly, by a very illogical *metabasis*, from “universals” to particulars.

Both parties appealed to Aristotle. By a singular fortune, a pagan philosopher, introduced into

Western Europe by Mohammedans, became the supreme authority of the Christian world. Aristotle was the Scripture of the Middle Age. Luther found this authority in his way, and disposed of it in short order, devoting Aristotle without ceremony to the Devil, as "a damned mischief-making heathen." But Leibniz, whose large discourse looked before as well as after, reinstated not only Aristotle, but Plato, and others of the Greek philosophers, in their former repute: "*Car ces anciens,*" he said, "*étaient plus solides qu'on ne croît.*" He was the first to turn the tide of popular opinion in their favor.

Not without a struggle was he brought to side with the Nominalists. Musing, when a boy, in the Rosenthal, near Leipsic, he debated long with himself,— "Whether he would give up the Substantial Forms of the Schoolmen." Strange matter for boyish deliberation! Yes, good youth, by all means give them up! They have had their day. They served to amuse the imprisoned intellect of Christendom in times of ecclesiastical thralldom, when learning knew no other vocation. But the age into which you are born has its own problems, of nearer interest and more commanding import. The measuring-reed of science is to be laid to the heavens, the solar system is to be weighed in a balance; the age of logical quiddities has passed,

the age of mathematical quantities has come. Give them up! You will soon have enough to do to take care of your own. What with Dynamics and Infinitesimals, Pasigraphy and Dyadik, Monads and Majesties, Concilium Ægyptiacum and Spanish Succession and Hanoverian cabals, there will be scant room in that busy brain for Substantial Forms. Let them sleep, dust to dust, with the tomes of Duns Scotus and the bones of Aquinas!

The "De Principio Individui" was the last treatise of any note in the sense and style of the old scholastic philosophy. It was also one of the last blows aimed at scholasticism, which, long undermined by the Saxon Reformation, received its *coup-de-grace* a century later from the pen of an English wit. Says the author of "Martinus Scriblerus,"—

"Cornelius told Martin that a shoulder of mutton was an individual; which Crambe denied, for he had seen it cut into commons. 'That's true,' quoth the tutor; 'but you never saw it cut into shoulders of mutton.' 'If it could be,' quoth Crambe, 'it would be the loveliest individual of the University.' When he was told that a *substance* was that which is subject to *accidents*, 'Then soldiers,' quoth Crambe, 'are the most substantial people in the world.' Neither would he allow it to be a good definition of accident that it could be present or absent without the destruction of the subject, since there are a great many accidents that destroy the subject, as burning

does a house and death a man. But as to that, Cornelius informed him that there was a *natural* death and a *logical* death ; and that though a man after his natural death was incapable of the least parish office, yet he might still keep his stall among the logical predicaments. . . . Crambe regretted extremely that *Substantial Forms*, a race of harmless beings which had lasted for many years and had afforded a comfortable subsistence to many poor philosophers, should now be hunted down like so many wolves, without the possibility of retreat. He considered that it had gone much harder with them than with the *Essences*, which had retired from the schools into the apothecaries' shops, where some of them had been advanced into the degree of *Quintessences*. He thought there should be a retreat for poor *Substantial Forms* amongst the gentleman-ushers at court ; and that there were, indeed, substantial forms, such as forms of prayer and forms of government, without which the things themselves could never long subsist."

Arrived at maturity, Leibniz rose at once to classic eminence. He became a conspicuous figure, he became a commanding power, not only in the intellectual world, of which he constituted himself the centre, but in part also of the civil. It lay in the nature of his genius to prove all things, and it lay in his temperament to seek *rapprochement* with all sorts of men. He was infinitely related. Not an individual of note in his day but was linked with him by some common interest or some polemic grapple ; not a *savant* or statesman with whom Leibniz did

not spin, on one pretence or another, a thread of communication. Europe was reticulated with the meshes of his correspondence. "Never," says Voltaire, "was intercourse among philosophers more universal; *Leibniz servait à l'animer.*" He writes now to Spinoza at the Hague, to suggest new methods of manufacturing lenses; now to Magliabecchi at Florence, urging, in elegant Latin verses, the publication of his bibliographical discoveries; and now to Grimaldi, Jesuit missionary in China, to communicate his researches in Chinese philosophy. He hoped by means of the latter to operate on the Emperor Cham-Hi with the *Dyadik*; ¹ and even suggested said *Dyadik* as a key to the cipher of the book "Ye Kim," supposed to contain the sacred mysteries of Fo. He addresses Louis XIV., now on the subject of a military expedition to Egypt (a magnificent idea, which it needed a Napoleon to realize), now on the best method of promoting and conserving scientific knowledge. He corresponds with the Landgrave of Hesse-Rheinfels, with Bossuet, and with Madame Brinon on the Union of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, and with Privy-Counsellor von Spanheim on the Union of the Lutheran and

¹ A species of binary arithmetic, invented by Leibniz, in which the only figures employed are O and I.—See Kortholt: G. G. Leibnitii Epistolæ ad Diversos, letter xviii.

Reformed ; with Père des Bosses on Transubstantiation, and with Samuel Clarke on Time and Space ; with Remond de Montmort on Plato, and with Franke on Popular Education ; with the Queen of Prussia (his pupil) on Free-will and Predestination, and with the Electress Sophia, her mother (in her eighty-fourth year), on English politics ; with the cabinet of Peter the Great on the Slavonic and Oriental languages, and with that of the German Emperor on the claims of George Lewis to the honors of the Electorate ; and finally, with all the *savans* of Europe on all possible scientific questions.

Of this world-wide correspondence a portion related to the sore subject of his litigated claim to originality in the discovery of the Differential Calculus, — a matter in which Leibniz felt himself grievously wronged, and complained, with justice, of the treatment he received at the hands of his contemporaries. The controversy between him and Newton respecting this hateful topic would never have originated with either of these illustrious men, had it depended on them alone to vindicate their respective claims. Officious and ill-advised friends of the English philosopher, partly from misguided zeal and partly from levelled malice, preferred on his behalf a charge of plagiarism against the German which Newton was not likely to have

urged for himself. "The new Calculus, which Europe lauds, is nothing less," they suggested, "than your fluxionary method, which M. Leibniz has pirated, anticipating its tardy publication by the genuine author. Why suffer your laurels to be wrested from you by a stranger?" Thereupon arose the notorious *Commercium Epistolicum*, in which Wallis, Fatio de Duillier, Collins, and Keill were perversely active. Melancholy monument of literary and national jealousy! Weary record of a vain strife! Ideas are no man's property. As well pretend to ownership of light, or set up a claim to private estate in the Holy Ghost. The Spirit blows where it lists. Truth inspires whom it finds. He who knows best to conspire with it has it. Both philosophers swerved from their native simplicity and nobleness of soul. Both sinned and were sinned against. Leibniz did unhandsome things, but he was sorely tried. His heart told him that the right of the quarrel was on his side, and the general stupidity would not see it. The general malice, rejoicing in aspersion of a noble name, would not see it. The Royal Society would not see it, nor France, until long after Leibniz's death. Sir David Brewster's account of the matter, according to the German authorities, Gerhardt, Guhrauer, and others, is one-sided, and sins by *suppressio veri*, ignoring important documents, particularly Leib-

niz's letter to Oldenburg, August 27, 1676. Gerhardt has published Leibniz's own history of the Calculus as a counter-statement.¹ But even from Brewster's account, as we remember it (we have it not by us at this writing), there is no more reason to doubt that Leibniz's discovery was independent of Newton's than that Newton's was independent of Leibniz's. The two discoveries, in fact, are not identical; the end and application are the same, but origin and process differ, and the German method has long superseded the English. The question in debate has been settled by supreme authority. Leibniz has been tried by his peers. Euler, Lagrange, Laplace, Poisson, and Biot have honorably acquitted him of plagiarism, and reinstated him in his rights as true discoverer of the Differential Calculus.

The one distinguishing trait of Leibniz's genius, and the one pre-eminent fact in his history, was what Feuerbach calls his *πολυπραγμοσύνη*, which, being interpreted, means having a finger in every pie. We are used to consider him as a man of letters; but the greater part of his life was spent in labors of quite another kind. He was more actor than writer. He wrote only for occasions, at the instigation of others, or to meet some pressing

¹ *Historia et Origo Calculi Differentialis*, a G. W. Leibnitio conscripta.

demand of the time. Besides occupying himself with mechanical inventions, some of which (in particular his improvement of Pascal's Calculating Machine) were quite famous in their day; besides his project of a universal language, and his labors to bring about a union of the churches; besides undertaking the revision of the laws of the German Empire, superintending the Hanoverian mines, experimenting in the culture of silk, directing the medical profession, laboring in the promotion of popular education, establishing academies of science, superintending royal libraries, ransacking the archives of Germany and Italy to find documents for his history of the House of Brunswick, a work of immense research,¹ — besides these and a multitude of similar and dissimilar avocations, he was deep in politics, German and European, and was occupied all his life long with political negotiations. He was a courtier, he was a *diplomat*; was consulted on all difficult matters of international policy; was employed at Hanover, at Berlin, at Vienna, in the public and secret service of ducal, royal, and imperial governments, and charged with all sorts of delicate and difficult commissions, — matters of finance, of pacification, of

¹ *Anales Imperii Occidentis Brunsvicensis*. Leibniz succeeded in discovering at Modena the lost traces of that connection between the lines of Brunswick and Este which had been surmised, but not proved.

treaty and appeal. He was Europe's factotum. A complete biography of the man would be an epitome of the history of his time. The number and variety of his public engagements were such as would have crazed any ordinary brain. And to these were added private studies not less multifarious. "I am distracted beyond all account," he writes to Vincent Placcius. "I am making extracts from archives, inspecting ancient documents, hunting up unpublished manuscripts: all this to illustrate the history of Brunswick. Letters in great number I receive and write. Then I have so many discoveries in mathematics, so many speculations in philosophy, so many other literary observations, which I am desirous of preserving, that I am often at a loss what to take hold of first, and can fairly sympathize in that saying of Ovid, 'I am straitened by my abundance.'"¹

His diplomatic services are less known at present than his literary labors, but were not less esteemed in his own day. When Louis XIV., in 1688, declared war against the German Empire, on the pretence that the Emperor was meditating an invasion of France, Leibniz drew up the Imperial manifesto, which repelled the charge and triumphantly exposed the hollowness of Louis' cause. Another document, prepared by him at the solici-

¹ *Inopem me copia facit.*

tation, it is supposed, of several of the courts of Europe, advocating the claims of Charles of Austria to the vacant throne of Spain, in opposition to the grandson of Louis, and setting forth the injurious consequences of the policy of the French monarch, was hailed by his contemporaries as a masterpiece of historical learning and political wisdom. By his powerful advocacy of the cause of the Elector of Brandenburg he may be said to have aided the birth of the kingdom of Prussia, whose existence dates with the commencement of the last century. In the service of that kingdom he wrote and published important state papers; among them one relating to a point of contested right to which recent events have given fresh significance: "*Traité Sommaire du Droit de Frédéric I. Roi de Prusse à la Souveraineté de Neuchâtel et de Vallengin en Suisse.*"

In Vienna, as at Berlin, the services of Leibniz were subsidized by the state. By the peace of Utrecht the House of Hapsburg had been defeated in its claims to the Spanish throne, and the foreign and internal affairs of the Austrian Government were involved in many perplexities which, it was hoped, the philosopher's counsel might help to untangle. He was often present at the private meetings of the cabinet, and received from the Emperor the honorable distinction of *Kaiserlicher Hofrath*,

in addition to that which had previously been awarded to him, of Baron of the Empire. The highest post in the gift of Government was open to him on condition of renouncing his Protestant faith, which, notwithstanding his tolerant feeling toward the Roman Church, and the splendid compensations which awaited such a convertite, he could never be prevailed upon to do.

A natural, but very remarkable, consequence of this manifold activity and lifelong absorption in public affairs was the failure of so great a thinker to produce a single systematic and elaborate work containing a complete and detailed exposition of his philosophical, and especially his ontological, views. For such an exposition Leibniz could find at no period of his life the requisite time and scope. In the vast multitude of his productions there is no complete philosophic work. The most arduous of his literary labors are historical compilations made in the service of the state. Such were the "History of the House of Brunswick," already mentioned, the "Accessiones Historiæ," the "Scriptores Rerum Brunsvicensium Illustrationi inservientes," and the "Codex Juris Gentium Diplomaticus," — works involving an incredible amount of labor and research, but adding little to his postumous fame. His philosophical studies after entering the Hanoverian service, which he

did in his thirtieth year, were pursued, as he tells his correspondent Placcius, by stealth ; that is, at odd moments snatched from official duties and the cares of state. Accordingly, his metaphysical works have all a fragmentary character. Instead of systematic treatises, they are loose papers, contributions to journals and magazines, or sketches prepared for the use of friends. They are all occasional productions, elicited by some external cause, not prompted by inward necessity. The “*Nouveaux Essais*,” his most considerable work in that department, originated in comments on Locke, and was not published until after his death. The “*Monadology*” is a series of propositions drawn up for the use of Prince Eugene, and was never intended to be made public ; and probably the “*Théodicée*” would never have seen the light except for his cultivated and loved pupil, the Queen of Prussia, for whose instruction it was designed.

It is a curious fact, and a good illustration of the state of letters in Germany at that time, that Leibniz wrote so little — almost nothing of importance — in his native tongue. In Erdmann’s edition of his philosophical works there are only two short essays in German ; the rest are all Latin or French. He had it in contemplation at one time to establish a philosophical journal in Berlin, but doubts, in his letter to M. La Croye on the subject, in what

language it should be conducted : “ Il y a quelque tems que j’ay pensé à un journal de Savans qu’on pourroit publier à Berlin, mais je suis un peu en doute sur la langue. . . . Mais soit qu’on prit le Latin ou le François,”¹ etc. It seems never to have occurred to him that such a journal might be published in German. That language was then, and for a long time after, regarded by educated Germans very much as the Russian is regarded at the present day, — as the language of vulgar life, unsuited to learned or polite intercourse. Frederic the Great, a century later, thought as meanly of its adaptation to literary purposes as did the contemporaries of Leibniz. When Gellert, at his request, repeated to him one of his fables, he expressed his surprise that anything so clever could be produced in German. It may be said in apology for this neglect of their native tongue, that the German scholars of that age would have had a very inadequate audience, had their communications been confined to that language. Leibniz craved and deserved a wider sphere for his thoughts than the use of the German could give him. It ought, however, to be remembered to his credit, that as language in general was one among the numberless topics he investigated, so the German in particular engaged at one time his special attention. It was made the

¹ Kortholt : *Epistolæ ad Diversos*, vol. i.

subject of a disquisition which suggested to the Berlin Academy in the next century the method adopted by that body for the culture and improvement of the national speech. In this writing, as in all his German compositions, he manifested a complete command of the language, and imparted to it a purity and elegance of diction very uncommon in his day. The German of Leibniz is less antiquated at this moment than the English of his contemporary, Locke.

LEIBNIZ'S PHILOSOPHY.

THE interest to us in this extraordinary man — who died at Hanover, 1716, in the midst of his labors and projects — turns mainly on his speculative philosophy. It was only as an incidental pursuit that he occupied himself with metaphysic, yet no philosopher since Aristotle — with whom, though claiming to be more Platonic than Aristotelian, he has much in common — has furnished more luminous hints for the elucidation of metaphysical problems. The problems he attempted were those which concern the most inscrutable, but to the genuine metaphysician most fascinating, of all topics, — the nature of substance, matter and spirit, absolute being; in a word, *Ontology*. This department of metaphysic, the most interesting, and,

agonistically,¹ the most important branch of that study, has been deliberately, purposely, and, with one or two exceptions, uniformly avoided by the English metaphysicians, so-called, with Locke at their head, and equally by their Scottish successors, until the recent "Institutes" of the late Professor of St. Andrew's. Locke's "Essay concerning the Human Understanding," a century and a half ago, diverted the English mind from metaphysic proper into what is commonly called Psychology, but ought of right to be termed *Noology*, or "Philosophy of the Human Mind," as Dugald Stewart entitled his treatise. This is the study which has usually taken the place of metaphysic at Cambridge and other colleges. We well remember our disappointment when, at the usual stage in the college curriculum, we were promised "metaphysics," and were set to grind in Stewart's profitless mill, where so few problems of either practical or theoretical importance are brought to the hopper, and where, in fact, the object is rather to show how the upper millstone revolves upon the nether (reflection upon sensation), and how the grist is conveyed to the feeder, than to realize actual metaphysical flour.

Locke's reason for repudiating ontology is the

¹ That is, as a discipline of the faculties, — the chief benefit to be derived from any kind of metaphysical study.

alleged impossibility of arriving at truth in that pursuit, — “of finding satisfaction in a quiet and sure possession of truths that most concern us, whilst we let loose our thoughts into the vast ocean of being.”¹ Unfortunately, however, as Kant has shown, the results of noological inquiry are just as questionable as those of ontology, whilst the topics on which it is employed are of far inferior moment. If, as Locke intimates, we can know nothing of being without first analyzing the understanding, it is equally sure that we can know nothing of the understanding except in union with and in action on being. And excepting his own fundamental position concerning the sensuous origin of our ideas, there is hardly a theorem, in all the writings of this school, of prime and vital significance. The school is tartly, but aptly, characterized by Professor Ferrier : —

“Would people inquire directly into the laws of thought and of knowledge by merely looking to knowledge or to thought itself, without attending to what is known or what is thought of? Psychology usually goes to work in this abstract fashion ; but such a mode of procedure is hopeless, — as hopeless as the analogous instance by which the wits of old were wont to typify any particularly fruitless undertaking ; namely, the operation of milking a he-goat into a sieve. No milk comes, in the first place, and even that the sieve will not retain ! There is a loss of nothing twice

¹ Essay, book i. chap. 1, sect. 7.

over. Like the man milking, the inquirer obtains no milk in the first place ; and, in the second place, he loses it, like the man holding the sieve. . . . Our Scottish philosophy, in particular, has presented a spectacle of this description. Reid obtained no result, owing to the abstract nature of his inquiry ; and the nothingness of his system has escaped through all the sieves of his successors.”¹

Leibniz’s metaphysical speculations are scattered through a wide variety of writings, many of which are letters to his contemporaries. These Professor Erdmann has incorporated in his edition of the *Philosophical Works*. Besides these we may mention, as particularly deserving of notice, the “*Meditationes de Cognitione, Veritate et Ideis*,” the “*Système Nouveau de la Nature*,” “*De Primæ Philosophiæ Emendatione, et de Notione Substantiæ*,” “*Réflexions sur l’Essai de l’Entendement humain*,” “*De Rerum Originatione Radicali*,” “*De ipsa Natura*,” “*Considérations sur la Doctrine d’un Esprit universel*,” “*Nouveaux Essais sur l’Entendement humain*,” “*Considérations sur le Principe de Vie*.” To these we must add the “*Théodicée*” (though more theological than metaphysical) and the “*Monadologie*,” the most compact philosophical treatise of modern time. It is worthy of note that, writing in the desultory, fragmentary, and accidental way he did, he not only wrote with

¹ *Institutes of Metaphysic*, p. 301.

unexampled clearness on matters the most abstruse, but never, that we are aware, in all the variety of his communications, extending over so many years, contradicted himself. No philosopher is more intelligible, none more consequent.

In philosophy Leibniz was a *Realist*. We use that term in the modern, not in the scholastic, sense. In the scholastic sense, as we have seen, he was not a Realist, but from childhood up, a Nominalist. But the Realism of the schools has less affinity with the Realism than with the Idealism of the present day.

His opinions must be studied in connection with those of his contemporaries.

Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and Leibniz, the four most distinguished philosophers of the seventeenth century, represent four widely different and cardinal tendencies in philosophy, — Dualism, Idealism, Sensualism,¹ and Realism.

Descartes perceived the incompatibility of the two primary qualities of being, thought and extension, as attributes of one and the same (created) substance. He therefore postulated two (created) substances, — one characterized by thought without extension, the other by extension without thought. These two are so alien and so incon-

¹ We regret the necessity of using a word which is oftener used in a bad sense very different from the one here intended.

gruous that neither can influence the other, or determine the other, or any way relate with the other, except by direct mediation of Deity (the doctrine of Occasional Causes). This is Dualism,—that sharp and rigorous antithesis of mind and matter which Descartes, if he did not originate it, was the first to develop into philosophic significance, and which ever since has been the prevailing ontology of the Western world. So deeply has the thought of that master mind inwrought itself into the very consciousness of humanity!

Spinoza saw that if God alone can bring mind and matter together and effect a relation between them, it follows that mind and matter, or their attributes, however contrary, do meet in Deity; and if so, what need of three distinct natures? What need of two substances besides God, as subjects of these attributes? Retain the middle term and drop the extremes, and you have the Spinozan doctrine of one (uncreated) substance, combining the attributes of thought and extension. This is Pantheism, or *objective* idealism, as distinguished from the *subjective* idealism of Fichte. Strange that the stigma of atheism should have been affixed to a system whose very starting-point is Deity, and whose great characteristic is the *ignorance* of everything but Deity, insomuch that the pure and devout Novalis pronounced the author a God-

drunken man, and Spinozism a surfeit of Deity.¹ Naturally enough, the charge of atheism comes from the unbelieving Bayle, whose omnivorous mind, like the anaconda, assisted its enormous deglutition with a poisonous saliva of its own, and whose negative temper makes the "Dictionnaire Historique" more *Morgue* than *Valhalla*.

Locke, who combined in a strange union strong religious faith with philosophic unbelief, turned aside, as we have seen, from the questions which had occupied his predecessors; knew little and cared less about substance and accident, matter and spirit; but set himself to investigate the nature of the organ itself by which truth is apprehended. In this investigation he began by emptying the mind of all native elements of knowledge. He repudiated any supposed dower of original truths or innate or connate ideas, and endeavored to show how, by acting on the report of the senses and personal experience, the understanding arrives at all the ideas of which it is conscious. The mode of procedure in this case is empiricism; the result with Locke was sensualism,—more fully developed by Condillac² in the next century. But the same

¹ Let us not be misunderstood. Pantheism is not Theism, and the one substance of Spinoza is very unlike the one God of theology; but neither is the doctrine Atheism in any legitimate sense.

² *Essai sur l'Origine des Connaissances humaines*.

method may lead, as in the case of Berkeley, to immaterialism, falsely called idealism. Or it may lead, as in the case of Helvetius, to materialism. Locke himself would probably have landed in materialism, had he followed freely the bent of his own thought, without the restraints of a cautious temper, and respect for the common and traditional opinion of his time. The "Essay" discovers an unmistakable leaning in that direction; as where the author supposes, —

"We shall never be able to know whether any mere material being thinks or no; it being impossible for us, by the contemplation of our own ideas, without revelation, to discover whether Omnipotency has not given to some systems of matter fitly disposed a power to perceive and think; . . . it being, in respect of our notions, not much more remote from our comprehension to conceive that God can, if he pleases, superadd to matter a faculty of thinking, than that he should superadd to it another substance with a faculty of thinking, since we know not wherein thinking consists, nor to what sort of substances the Almighty has been pleased to give that power, which cannot be in any created being but merely by the good pleasure and bounty of the Creator. For I see no contradiction in it, that the first thinking eternal Being should, if he pleased, give to certain systems of created, senseless matter, put together as he thinks fit, some degrees of sense, perception, and thought."¹

With such notions of the nature of thought, as

¹ Book iv. chap. 3, sect. 6.

a kind of mechanical contrivance that can be conferred outright by an arbitrary act of Deity, and attached to one nature as well as another, it is evident that Locke could have had no idea of spirit as conceived by metaphysicians, or no belief in that idea, if conceived. And with such conceptions of Deity and Divine operations, as consisting in absolute power dissociated from absolute reason, one would not be surprised to find him asserting that God, if he pleased, might make two and two to be one, instead of four; that mathematical laws are arbitrary determinations of the Supreme Will; that a thing is true only as God wills it to be so, — in fine, that there is no such thing as absolute truth. The resort to “Omnipotency” in such matters is more convenient than philosophical; it is a dodging of the question, instead of an attempt to solve it. Divine ordination — *Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή* — is a maxim which settles all difficulties; but it also precludes all inquiry. Why speculate at all, with this universal solvent at hand?

The “contradiction” which Locke could not see was clearly seen and keenly felt by Leibniz. The arbitrary will of God, to him, was no solution. He believed in necessary truths independent of the Supreme Will; in other words, he believed that the Supreme Will is but the organ of the Supreme

Reason: "Il ne faut point s'imaginer que les vérités éternelles, étant dépendantes de Dieu, sont arbitraires et dépendant de sa volonté." He felt, with Descartes, the incompatibility of thought with extension, considered as an immanent quality of substance, and he shared with Spinoza the unific propensity which distinguishes the higher order of philosophic minds. Dualism was an offence to him. On the other hand, he differed from Spinoza in his vivid sense of individuality, of personality. The pantheistic idea of a single, sole being, of which all other beings are mere modalities, was also and equally an offence to him. He saw well the illusoriness and unfruitfulness of such a universe as Spinoza dreamed. He saw it to be a vain imagination, a dream-world, "without form, and void," nowhere blossoming into reality. The philosophy of Leibniz is equally remote from that of Descartes on the one hand, and from that of Spinoza on the other. He diverges from the former on the question of substance, which Descartes conceived as consisting of two kinds, one active (thinking), and one passive (extended), but which Leibniz conceives to be all and only active. He explodes Dualism, and resolves the antithesis of matter and spirit by positing extension as a continuous act instead of a passive mode; substance as an active force instead of an inert mass; matter

as substance appearing, communicating, — as the necessary band and relation of spirits among themselves.¹

He parts company with Spinoza on the question of individuality. Substance is homogeneous ; but substances, or beings, are infinite. Spinoza looked upon the universe, and saw in it the undivided background on which the objects of human consciousness are painted as momentary pictures. Leibniz looked, and saw that background, like the background of one of Raphael's Madonnas, instinct with individual life and swarming with

¹ The following passages may serve as illustrations of these positions : —

“Materia habet de se actum entitativum.” — *De Princip. Indiv. Coroll. i.*

“Dicam interim notionem virium seu virtutis (quam Germani vocant *Kraft*, Galli *la force*), cui ego explicandæ peculiarem Dynamices scientiam destinavi, plurimum lucis afferre ad veram notionem substantiæ intelligendam.” — *De Princip. Philosoph. Emendat. et de Notione Substantiæ.*

“Corpus ergo est agens extensum ; dici poterit esse substantiam extensam, modo teneatur omnem substantiam agere, at omne agens substantiam appellari. . . . Patebit non tantum mentes, sed etiam substantias omnes in loco, non nisi per operationem esse.” — *De Vera Method. Phil. et Theol.*

“Extensionem concipere ut absolutum ex eo forte oritur quod spatium concipimus per modum substantiæ.” — *Ad Des Bosses Ep. xxix.*

“Car l'étendue ne signifie qu'une répétition ou multiplicité continuée de ce qui est répandu.” — *Extrait d'une Lettre, etc.*

“Et l'on peut dire que l'étendue est en quelque façon à l'espace comme la durée est au tems.” — *Exam. des Principes de Malebranche.*

intelligences which look out from every point of space. Leibniz's universe is composed of Monads, that is, units, individual substances or entities, having neither extension, parts, nor figure, and, of course, indivisible. These are "the veritable atoms of nature, the elements of things."

The monad is unformed and imperishable; it has no natural end or beginning. It could begin to be only by creation; it can cease to be only by annihilation. It cannot be affected from without, or changed in its interior by any other creature. Still, it must have qualities, without which it would not be an entity. And monads must differ one from another, or there would be no changes in our experience; since all that takes place in compound bodies is derived from the simples which compose them. Moreover, the monad, though uninfluenced from without, is changing continually; the change proceeds from an internal principle. Every monad is subject to a multitude of affections and relations, although without parts. This shifting state, which represents multitude in unity, is nothing else than what we call *Perception*, which must be

"La nature de la substance consistant à mon avis dans cette tendance réglée de laquelle les phénomènes naissent par ordre." — *Lettre à M. Bayle.*

"Car rien n'a mieux marqué la substance que la puissance d'agir." — *Réponse aux Objections du P. Lami.*

"S'il n'y avait que des esprits, ils seraient sans la liaison nécessaire, sans l'ordre des tems et des lieux." — *Théod.*, sect. 120.

carefully distinguished from *Apperception*, or consciousness. And the action of the internal principle which causes change in the monad, or a passing from one perception to another, is *Appetition*. The desire does not always attain to the perception to which it tends, but it always effects something, and causes a change of perceptions.

Leibniz differs from Locke in maintaining that perception is inexplicable and inconceivable on mechanical principles. It is always the act of a simple substance, never of a compound. And "in simple substances there is nothing but perceptions and their changes."¹ He differs from Locke, furthermore, on the question of the origin of ideas. This question, he says, "is not a preliminary one in philosophy, and one must have made great progress to be able to grapple successfully with it." "Meanwhile, I think I may say that our ideas, even those of sensible objects, *viennent de nôtre propre fond*. . . . I am by no means for the *tabula rasa* of Aristotle; on the contrary, there is to me something rational (*quelque chose de solide*) in what Plato called *reminiscence*. Nay, more than that, we have not only a reminiscence of all our past thoughts, but we have also a *presentiment* of all our thoughts."²

Mr. Lewes, in his "Biographical History of Phil-

¹ *Monadology*, 17.

² *Réflexions sur l'Essai de l'Entendement humain*.

osophy," speaks of the essay from which these words are quoted as written in "a somewhat supercilious tone." We are unable to detect any such feature in it. That trait was wholly foreign from Leibniz's nature. "Car je suis des plus dociles," he says of himself in this same essay.¹ He was the most tolerant of philosophers. "Je ne méprise presque rien." "Nemo est ingenio minus quam ego censorio." "Mirum dictu: probò pleraque quæ lego." "Non admodum refutationes quærere aut legere soleo."

To return to the monads. Each monad, according to Leibniz, is, properly speaking, a soul, inasmuch as each is endowed with perception. But in order to distinguish those which have only perception from those which have also sentiment and memory, he will call the latter *souls*, the former *monads* or *entelechies*.¹ The naked monad, he says, has perceptions without relief, or "enhanced flavor;" it is in a state of stupor. Death, he thinks, may produce this state for a time in animals. The monads completely fill the world; there

¹ *Entelechy* (*ἐντελέχεια*) is an Aristotelian term, signifying activity, or more properly, perhaps, self-action. Leibniz understands by it something complete in itself (*ἔχον τὸ ἐντελές*). Mr. Butler, in his "History of Ancient Philosophy," lately reprinted in this country, translates it "act." "Function," we think, would be a better rendering (see W. Archer Butler's "Lectures," Last Series, lect. 2). Aristotle uses the word as a definition of the soul. "The soul," he says, "is the first entelechy of an active body."

is never and nowhere a void, and never complete inanimateness and inertness. The universe is a *plenum* of souls. Wherever we behold an organic whole (*unum per se*), there monads are grouped around a central monad to which they are subordinate, and which they are constrained to serve so long as that connection lasts. Masses of inorganic matter are aggregations of monads, without a reagent, or sentient soul (*unum per accidens*). There can be no monad without matter, that is, without society, and no soul without a body. Not only the human soul is indestructible and immortal, but also the animal soul. There is no generation out of nothing, and no absolute death. Birth is expansion, development, growth; and death is contraction, envelopment, decrease. The monads which are destined to become human souls have existed from the beginning in organic matter, but only as sentient or animal souls, without reason. They remain in this condition until the generation of the human beings to which they belong, and then develop themselves into rational souls. The different organs and members of the body are also relatively souls which collect around them a number of monads for a specific purpose, and so on *ad infinitum*. Matter is not only infinitely divisible, but infinitely divided. All matter (so called) is living and active. "Every particle of matter may

be conceived as a garden of plants or as a pond full of fishes. But each branch of each plant, each member of each animal, each drop of their humors, is in turn another such garden or pond.”¹ The connection between monads, consequently the connection between soul and body, is not composition, but an organic relation,—in some sort a spontaneous relation. The soul forms its own body, and moulds it to its purpose. This hypothesis was afterwards embraced and developed as a physiological principle by Stahl. As all the atoms in one body are organically related, so all the beings in the universe are organically related to each other and to the All. One creature, or one organ of a creature, being given, there is given with it the world’s history from the beginning to the end. *All bodies are strictly fluid; the universe is in flux.*

The principle of continuity answers the same purpose in Leibniz’s system that the single substance does in Spinoza’s; it vindicates the essential unity of all being. Yet the two conceptions are immeasurably different, and constitute an immeasurable difference between the two systems, considered in their practical and moral bearings, as well as their ontological aspects. Spinoza²

¹ Monadol. 67.

² See Helferich: Spinoza und Leibniz, p. 76.

starts with the idea of the Infinite, or the All-One, from which there is no logical deduction of the individual; and in Spinoza's system the individual does not exist except as a modality. But the existence of the individual is one of the primordial truths of the human mind, the foremost fact of consciousness. With this, therefore, Leibniz begins, and arrives, by logical induction, to the Absolute and Supreme. Spinoza ends where he begins, in pantheism; the moral result of his system, Godward, is fatalism, — manward, indifference and negation of moral good and evil. Leibniz ends in theism; the moral result of his system, Godward, is optimism, — manward, liberty, personal responsibility, moral obligation.

He demonstrates the being of God by the necessity of a sufficient reason to account for the series of things. Each finite thing requires an antecedent or contingent cause. But the supposition of an endless sequence of contingent causes or finite things is absurd; the series must have had a beginning, and that beginning cannot have been a contingent cause or finite thing. "The final reason of things must be found in a necessary substance in which the detail of changes exists eminently (*ne soit qu'éminement*), as in its source; and this is what we call God."¹ The idea of God

¹ Monadol. 38.

is of such a nature that the being corresponding to it, if possible, must be actual. We have the idea; it involves no bounds, no negation, consequently no contradiction. It is the idea of a possible, therefore of an actual.

“God is the primitive Unity, or the simple original Substance of which all the creatures, or original monads, are the products, and *are generated, so to speak, by continual fulgurations from moment to moment, bounded by the receptivity of the creature*, of whose existence limitation is an essential condition.”¹

The philosophic theologian and the Christianizing philosopher will rejoice to find in this proposition a point of reconciliation between the extramundane God of pure theism and the cardinal principle of Spinozism, the immanence of Deity in creation,—a principle as dear to the philosophic mind as that of the extramundane Divinity is to the theologian. The universe of Spinoza is a self-existent unit, divine in itself, but with no Divinity behind it; that of Leibniz is an endless series of units from a self-existent and divine source. The one is an infinite deep, the other an everlasting flood.

The doctrine of the *Pre-established Harmony*, so intimately and universally associated with the name of Leibniz, has found little favor with his critics, or even with his admirers. Feuerbach

¹ Monadol. 47.

calls it his weak side, and thinks that Leibniz's philosophy, else so profound, was here, as in other instances, overshadowed by the popular creed; that he accommodated himself to theology as a highly cultivated and intelligent man, conscious of his superiority, accommodates himself to a lady in his conversation with her, translating his ideas into her language, and even paraphrasing them. From this view of Leibniz, as implying insincerity, we utterly dissent.¹ The author of the "*Théodicée*" was not more interested in philosophy than he was in theology; his thoughts and his purpose did equal justice to both. The deepest wish of his heart was to reconcile them, not by formal treaty, but in loving and condign union. We do not, however, object to an esoteric and exoteric view of the doctrine in question; and we quite agree with Feuerbach that the phrase *préétablie* does not express a metaphysical determination; it is one thing to say that God, by an arbitrary decree from everlasting, has so predisposed and predetermined every motion in the world of matter that each volition of

¹ See, in connection with this point, two admirable essays by Lessing. — the one entitled: Leibniz on Eternal Punishment; the other: Objections of Andreas Wissowatius to the Doctrine of the Trinity. Of the latter the real topic is Leibniz's *Defensio Trinitatis*. The sharp sighted Lessing, than whom no one has expressed a greater reverence for Leibniz, emphatically asserts and vigorously defends the philosopher's orthodoxy.

a rational agent finds in the constant procession of physical forces a concurrent event by which it is executed, but which would have taken place without his volition, just as the mail-coach takes our letter, if we have one, but goes all the same when we do not write, — this is the gross, exoteric view, — and a very different thing it is to say that the monads composing the human system and the universe of things are so related, adjusted, accommodated to each other and to the whole, each being a representative of all the rest and a mirror of the universe, that each feels all that passes in the rest, and all conspire in every act,¹ more or less effectively, in the ratio of their nearness to the prime agent. This is Leibniz's idea of pre-established harmony, which perhaps would be better expressed by the term "necessary consent."

"In the ideas of God each monad has a right to demand that God, in regulating the rest from the commencement of things, shall have regard to it; for since a created monad can have no physical influence on the interior of another, it is only by this means that one can be dependent on another." "The soul follows its own laws, and the body follows its own; and they meet in virtue of the pre-established harmony which exists between all substances, as representatives of one and the same universe. Souls act according."

¹ In this connection Leibniz quotes the remarkable saying of Hippocrates, *Σύμπνοια πάντα*, — the universe breathes together, conspires. Monadol. 61.

to the laws of final causes by appetitions, etc., bodies act according to the laws of efficient causes or the laws of motion ; and the two kingdoms, that of efficient causes and that of final causes, harmonize with each other.”¹

The Pre-established Harmony, then, is to be regarded as the philosophic statement of a fact, and not as a theory concerning the cause of the fact. But, like all philosophic and adequate statements, it answers the purpose of a theory, and clears up many difficulties. It is the best solution we know of the old contradiction of free-will and fate,—individual liberty and a necessary world. This antithesis disappears in the light of the Leibnitian philosophy, which resolves freedom and necessity into different points of view and different stages of development. The principle of the Pre-established Harmony was designed by Leibniz to meet the difficulty, started by Descartes, of explaining the conformity between the perceptions of the mind and the corresponding affections of the body, since mind and matter, in his view, could have no connection with, or influence on, each other. The Cartesians explained this correspondence by the theory of *occasional causes*, that is, by the intervention of the Deity, who was supposed by his arbitrary will to have decreed a certain perception or sensation in the mind to go with a certain affection

¹ Monadol. 78, 79.

of the body, with which, however, it had no real connection. “Car il” (that is, M. Bayle) “est persuadé avec les Cartésiens modernes, que les idées des qualités sensibles que Dieu donne, selon eux, à l’âme, à l’occasion des mouvemens du corps, n’ont rien qui représente ces mouvemens, ou qui leur ressemble; de sorte qu’il étoit purement arbitraire que Dieu nous donnât les idées de la chaleur, du froid, de la lumière, et autres que nous expérimentons, ou qu’il nous en donnât de toutes autres à cette même occasion.”¹ If the body was exposed to the flame, there was no more reason, according to this theory, why the soul should be conscious of pain than of pleasure, except that God had so ordained. Such a supposition was shocking to our philosopher, who could tolerate no arbitrariness in God, and no gap or discrepancy in Nature, and who, therefore, sought to explain, by the nature of the soul itself and its kindred monads, the correspondence for which so violent an hypothesis was embraced by the Cartesians.

It was in his character of theosopher that he obtained in the last century his widest fame. The work by which he is most commonly known, by which alone he is known to many, is the “Théodicée,” — an attempt to vindicate the goodness of

¹ *Théodicée*, partie ii. 340.

God against the cavils of unbelievers. He was one of the first to apply to this end the cardinal principle of the Lutheran Reformation,—the liberty of reason. He was one of the first to treat unbelief, from the side of religion, as an error of judgment, not as rebellion against rightful authority. The latter was and is the Romanist view. The former is the Protestant theory, but was not then, and is not always now, the Protestant practice. Theology then was not concerned to vindicate the reason or the goodness of God. It gloried in his physical strength, by which he would finally crush dissenters from orthodoxy. Leibniz knew no authority independent of Reason, and no God but the Supreme Reason directing Almighty Good-will. The philosophic conclusion justly deducible from this view of God, let cavillers say what they will, is Optimism. Accordingly, Optimism, or the doctrine of the best possible world, is the theory of the “*Théodicée*.” Our limits will not permit us to analyze the argument of this remarkable work. Bunsen says: “It necessarily failed, because it was a not quite honest compound of speculation and divinity.”¹ Few at the present day will pretend to be entirely satisfied with its reasoning; but all who are familiar with it know it to be a treasury of wise and profound thoughts and of noble senti-

¹ Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History, vol. i. chap. 6.

ments and aspirations. Bonnet, the naturalist, called it his "Manual of Christian Philosophy;" and Fontenelle, in his eulogy, speaks enthusiastically of its luminous and sublime views, of its reasonings, in which the mind of the geometer is always apparent, of its perfect fairness towards those whom it controverts, and its rich store of anecdote and illustration. Even Stewart, who was *not* familiar with it, and who, as might be expected, strangely misconceives and misrepresents the author, is compelled to echo the general sentiment. He pronounces it a work "in which are combined together in an extraordinary degree the acuteness of the logician, the imagination of the poet, and the *impenetrable yet sublime darkness* of the metaphysical theologian." The italics are ours. Our reason for doubting Stewart's familiarity with the "Théodicée," and with Leibniz in general, is derived in part from these phrases. We do not believe that any sincere student of Leibniz has found him dark and impenetrable. Be it a merit or a fault, this predicate is inapplicable. Never was metaphysician more explicit and more intelligible. Had he been disposed to mysticize and to shroud himself in "impenetrable darkness," he would have found it difficult to indulge that propensity in French. Thanks to the strict *régime* and happy limitations of that idiom, the French is

not a language in which philosophy can hide itself. It is a tight-fitting coat, which shows the exact form, or want of form, of the thought it clothes, without pad or fold to simulate fulness or to veil defects. It was a Frenchman, we are aware, who discovered that "the use of language is to conceal thought;" but that use, so far as French is concerned, has been hitherto monopolized by diplomacy.

Another reason for questioning Stewart's familiarity with Leibniz is his misconception of that author, which we choose to impute to ignorance rather than to wilfulness. This misconception is strikingly exemplified in a prominent point of Leibnizian philosophy. Stewart says: "The zeal of Leibniz in propagating the dogma of Necessity is not easily reconcilable with the hostility which he uniformly displays against the congenial doctrine of Materialism."¹ Now it happens that "the zeal of Leibniz" was exerted in precisely the opposite direction. A considerable section of the "*Théodicée*" (34-75) is occupied with the illustration and defence of the Freedom of the Will. It was a doctrine on which he laid great stress, and which forms an essential part of his system;²

¹ General View of the Prog. of Metaph. Eth. and Polit. Phil., p. 75. Boston, 1822.

² "Numquam Leibnitio in mentem venisse libertatem velle

in proof of which, let one declaration stand for many: "Je suis d'opinion que notre volonté n'est pas seulement exempte de la contrainte, mais encore de la nécessité." How far he succeeded in establishing that doctrine in accordance with the rest of his system is another question. That he believed it and taught it is a fact of which there can be no more doubt with those who have studied his writings, than there is that he wrote the works ascribed to him. But the freedom of will maintained by Leibniz was not indeterminism. It was not the indifference of the tongue of the balance between equal weights, or that of the ass between equal bundles of hay. Such an equilibrium he declares impossible. "Cet équilibre en tout sens est impossible." Buridan's imaginary case of the ass is a fiction "qui ne sauroit avoir lieu dans l'univers."¹ The will is always determined by motives, but not necessarily constrained by them. This is his doctrine, emphatically stated and zealously maintained. We doubt if any philosopher, equally profound and equally sincere, will ever find

evertere, in qua defendenda quam maxime fuit occupatus, omnia scripta, precipue autem Theodicæa ejus, clamitant." — KORTHOLT, vol. iv. p. 12.

¹ Leibniz seems to have been of the same mind with Dante :

"Intra duo cibi distanti e moventi
D' un modo, prima si morria di fame
Che liber' uomo l' un recasse a' denti."
Parad. iv. 1.

room in his conclusions for a greater measure of moral liberty than the "*Théodicée*" has conceded to man. "In respect to this matter," says Arthur Schopenhauer, "the great thinkers of all times are agreed and decided, just as surely as the mass of mankind will never see and comprehend the great truth, that the practical operation of liberty is not to be sought in single acts, but in the being and nature of man."¹ Leibniz's construction of the idea of a possible liberty consistent with the pre-established order of the universe is substantially that of Schelling in his celebrated essay on this subject. We must not dwell upon it, but hasten to conclude our imperfect sketch.

The ground idea of the "*Théodicée*" is expressed in the phrase, "Best possible world." Evil is a necessary condition of finite being; but the end of creation is the realization of the greatest possible perfection within the limits of the finite. The existing universe is one of innumerable possible universes, each of which, if actualized, would have had a different measure of good and evil. The present, rather than any other, was made actual, as presenting to Divine Intelligence the smallest measure of evil and the greatest amount of good. This idea is happily embodied in the closing

¹ Ueber den Willen in der Natur., p. 22. Frankfurt a. M., 1854.

apologue, designed to supplement one of Laurentius Valla, a writer of the fifteenth century. Theodorus, priest of Zeus at Dodona, demands why that god has permitted to Sextus the evil will which was destined to bring so much misery on himself and others. Zeus refers him to his daughter Athene. He goes to Athens, is commanded to lie down in the temple of Pallas, and is there visited with a dream. The vision takes him to the Palace of Destinies, which contains the plans of all possible worlds. He examines one plan after another; in each the same Sextus plays a different part and experiences a different fate. The plans improve as he advances, till at last he comes upon one whose superior excellence enchants him with delight. After revelling awhile in the contemplation of this perfect world, he is told that this is the actual world in which he lives. But in this the crime of Sextus is a necessary constituent; it could not be what it is as a whole, were it other than it is in its single parts.

Whatever may be thought of Leibniz's success in demonstrating his favorite doctrine, the theory of Optimism commends itself to piety and reason as that view of human and divine things which most redounds to the glory of God and best expresses the hope of man; as the noblest, and *therefore* the truest, theory of divine rule and human destiny.

We recall at this moment but one English writer of supreme mark who has held and promulged, in its fullest extent, the theory of Optimism. That one is a poet. The "Essay on Man," with one or two exceptions, might almost pass for a paraphrase of the "Théodicée;" and Pope, with characteristic vigor, has concentrated the meaning of that treatise in one word, which is none the less true, in the sense intended, because of its possible perversion,—"Whatever is is right."

THE MONADOLOGY OF LEIBNIZ.

[From the French.]

1. THE Monad, of which we shall here speak, is merely a simple substance entering into those which are compound; simple, that is to say, without parts.

2. And there must be simple substances, since there are compounds; for the compound is only a collection or aggregate of simples.

3. Where there are no parts, neither extension, nor figure, nor divisibility is possible; and these Monads are the veritable Atoms of Nature,—in one word, the Elements of things.

4. There is thus no danger of dissolution, and

there is no conceivable way in which a simple substance can perish naturally.

5. For the same reason, there is no way in which a simple substance can begin naturally, since it could not be formed by composition.

6. Therefore we may say that the Monads can neither begin nor end in any other way than all at once ; that is to say, they cannot begin except by creation, nor end except by annihilation ; whereas that which is compounded, begins and ends by parts.

7. There is also no intelligible way in which a Monad can be altered or changed in its interior by any other creature, since it would be impossible to transpose anything in it, or to conceive in it any internal movement — any movement excited, directed, augmented, or diminished within, such as may take place in compound bodies, where there is change of parts. The Monads have no windows through which anything can enter or go forth. It would be impossible for any accidents to detach themselves and go forth from the substances, as did formerly the Sensible Species of the schoolmen. Accordingly, neither substance nor accident can enter a Monad from without.

8. Nevertheless Monads must have qualities, otherwise they would not even be entities ; and if simple substances did not differ in their qualities,

there would be no means by which we could become aware of the changes of things, since all that is in compound bodies is derived from simple ingredients; and Monads, being without qualities, would be indistinguishable one from another, seeing also they do not differ in quantity. Consequently, a *plenum* being supposed, each place could in any movement receive only the just equivalent of what it had had before, and one state of things would be indistinguishable from another.

9. Moreover, each Monad must differ from every other, for there are never two beings in nature perfectly alike, and in which it is impossible to find an internal difference, or one founded on some intrinsic denomination.

10. I take it for granted, furthermore, that every created being is subject to change, — consequently, the created Monad; and likewise that this change is continual in each.

11. It follows, from what we have now said, that the natural changes of Monads proceed from an internal principle, since no external cause can influence the interior.

12. But, besides the principle of change, there must also be a detail of changes, embracing, so to speak, the specification and the variety of the simple substances.

13. This detail must involve multitude in unity

or in simplicity: for as all natural changes proceed by degrees, something changes and something remains; and consequently there must be in the simple substance a plurality of affections and relations, although there are no parts.

14. This shifting state, which involves and represents multitude in unity, or in the simple substance, is nothing else than what we call Perception, which must be carefully distinguished from *apperception*, or consciousness, as will appear in the sequel. Here it is that the Cartesians have especially failed, making no account of those perceptions of which we are not conscious. It is this that has led them to suppose that spirits are the only Monads, and that there are no souls of brutes or other Entelechies. It is owing to this that they have vulgarly confounded protracted torpor with actual death, and have fallen in with the scholastic prejudice, which believes in souls entirely separate. Hence, also, ill-affected minds have been confirmed in the opinion that the soul is mortal.

15. The action of the internal principle which causes the change, or the passage from one perception to another, may be called Appetition. It is true, the desire cannot always completely attain to every perception to which it tends, but it always attains to something thereof, and arrives at new perceptions.

16. We experience in ourselves the fact of multitude in the simple substance when we find that the least thought of which we are conscious includes a variety in its object. Accordingly, all who admit that the soul is a simple substance are bound to admit this multitude in the Monad; and Mr. Bayle should not have found any difficulty in this admission, as he has done in his Dictionary (art. *Rorarius*).

17. Besides, it must be confessed that Perception and its consequences are inexplicable by mechanical causes; that is to say, by figures and motions. If we imagine a machine so constructed as to produce thought, sensation, perception, we may conceive it magnified — the same proportions being preserved — to such an extent that one might enter it like a mill. This being supposed, we should find in it on inspection only pieces which impel each other, but nothing which can explain a perception. It is in the simple substance, therefore, — not in the compound, or in machinery, — that we must look for that phenomenon; and in the simple substance we find nothing else, — nothing, that is, but perceptions and their changes. Therein also, and therein only, consist all the internal acts of simple substances.

18. We might give the name of Entelechies to all simple substances or created Monads, inasmuch

as there is in them a certain completeness (perfection), (*ἔχουσι τὸ ἔντελες*). There is a sufficiency (*αὐτάρκεια*) which makes them the sources of their own internal actions, and, as it were, incorporeal automata.

19. If we choose to give the name of soul to all that has perceptions and desires, in the general sense which I have just indicated, all simple substances or created Monads may be called souls. But as sentiment is something more than simple perception, I am willing that the general name of Monads and Entelechies shall suffice for those simple substances which have nothing but perceptions, and that the term souls shall be confined to those whose perceptions are more distinct, and accompanied by memory.

20. For we experience in ourselves a state in which we remember nothing, and have no distinct perception, as when we are in a swoon, or in a profound and dreamless sleep. In this state the soul does not differ sensibly from a simple Monad; but since this state is not permanent, and since the soul delivers herself from it, she is something more.

21. And it does not by any means follow, in that case, that the simple substance is without perception, — that, indeed, is impossible, for the reasons given above; for it cannot perish, neither can it subsist without affection of some kind, which is

nothing else than its perception. But where there is a great number of minute perceptions, and where nothing is distinct, one is stunned, as when we turn round and round in continual succession in the same direction; whence arises a vertigo, which may cause us to faint, and which prevents us from distinguishing anything. And possibly death may produce this state for a time in animals.

22. And as every present condition of a simple substance is a natural consequence of its antecedent condition, so its present is big with its future.

23. Then as, on awaking from a state of stupor, we become conscious of our perceptions, we must have had perceptions, although unconscious of them, immediately before awaking. For each perception can have no other natural origin but an antecedent perception, as every motion must be derived from one which preceded it.

24. Thus it appears that if there were no distinction — no relief, so to speak — no enhanced flavor in our perceptions, we should continue forever in a state of stupor; and this is the condition of the naked Monad.

25. And so we see that Nature has given to animals enhanced perceptions, by the care which she has taken to furnish them with organs which collect many rays of light and many undulations of air, increasing their efficacy by their union. There

is something approaching to this in odor, in taste, in touch, and perhaps in a multitude of other senses of which we have no knowledge. I shall presently explain how that which passes in the soul represents that which takes place in the organs.

26. Memory gives to the soul a kind of consecutive action which imitates reason, but must be distinguished from it. We observe that animals, having a perception of something which strikes them, and of which they have previously had a similar perception, expect, through the representation of their memory, the recurrence of that which was associated with it in their previous perception, and incline to the same feelings which they then had. For example, when we show dogs the cane, they remember the pain which it caused them, and whine and run.

27. And the lively imagination which strikes and excites them arises from the magnitude or the multitude of their previous perceptions. For often a powerful impression produces suddenly the effect of long habit, or of moderate perceptions often repeated.

28. In men, as in brutes, the consecutiveness of their perceptions is due to the principle of memory, — like empirics in medicine, who have only practice without theory. And we are mere empirics in three fourths of our acts. For example, when we

expect that the sun will rise to-morrow, we judge so empirically, because it has always risen hitherto. Only the astronomer judges by an act of reason.

29. But the cognition of necessary and eternal truths is that which distinguishes us from mere animals. It is this which gives us Reason and Science, and raises us to the knowledge of ourselves and of God; and it is this in us which we call a reasonable soul or spirit.

30. It is also by the cognition of necessary truths, and by their abstractions, that we rise to acts of reflection, which give us the idea of that which calls itself "I," and which lead us to consider that this or that is in us. And thus, while thinking of ourselves, we think of Being, of substance, simple or compound, of the immaterial, and of God himself. We conceive that that which in us is limited, is in him without limit. And these reflective acts furnish the principal objects of our reasonings.

31. Our reasonings are founded on two great principles, that of *Contradiction*, by virtue of which we judge that to be false which involves contradiction, and that to be true which is opposed to, or which contradicts, the false.

32. And that of the *Sufficient Reason*, by virtue of which we judge that no fact can be real or existent, no statement true, unless there be a sufficient

reason why it is thus, and not otherwise, although these reasons very often cannot be known to us.

33. There are also two sorts of truths — those of reasoning and those of fact. Truths of reasoning are necessary, and their opposite is impossible; those of fact are contingent, and their opposite is possible. When a truth is necessary, we may discover the reason of it by analysis, resolving it into simpler ideas and truths, until we arrive at those which are ultimate.¹

34. It is thus that mathematicians by analysis reduce speculative theorems and practical canons to definitions, axioms, and postulates.

35. And, finally, there are simple ideas, of which no definition can be given; there are also axioms and postulates, — in one word, *ultimate*¹ *principles*, which cannot and need not be proved. And these are “Identical Propositions,” of which the opposite contains an express contradiction.

36. But there must also be a sufficient reason for truths contingent or truths of fact, — that is, for the series of things diffused through the universe of creatures, — or else the process of resolving into particular reasons might run into a detail without bounds, on account of the immense variety of the things of nature, and of the infinite division of bodies. There is an infinity of figures and of

¹ Primitifs.

movements, present and past, which enter into the efficient cause of my present writing ; and there is an infinity of minute inclinations and dispositions of my soul, present and past, which enter into the final cause of it.

37. And as all this detail only involves other anterior or more detailed contingencies, each one of which again requires a similar analysis in order to account for it, we have made no advance, and the sufficient or final reason must be outside of the series of this detail of contingencies,¹ endless as it may be.

38. And thus the final reason of things must be found in a necessary Substance, in which the detail of changes exists eminently as their source. And this is that which we call GOD.

39. Now this Substance being a sufficient reason of all this detail, which also is everywhere linked together, *there is but one God, and this God suffices.*

40. We may also conclude that this supreme Substance, which is Only,² Universal, and Necessary,—having nothing outside of it which is independent of it, and being a simple series of possible beings,—must be incapable of limits, and must contain as much of reality as is possible.

41. Whence it follows that God is perfect, per-

¹ That is, accidental causes.

² Unique.

fection being nothing but the magnitude of positive reality taken exactly, setting aside the limits or bounds in that which is limited. And there, where there are no bounds,—that is to say, in God,—perfection is absolutely infinite.

42. It follows, also, that the creatures have their perfections from the influence of God; but they have their imperfections from their proper nature, incapable of existing without bounds; for it is by this that they are distinguished from God.

43. It is true, moreover, that God is not only the source of existences, but also of essences, so far as real, or of that which is real in the possible; because the divine understanding is the region of eternal truths, or of the ideas on which they depend, and without him there would be nothing real in the possibilities, and not only nothing existing, but also nothing possible.

44. At the same time, if there be a reality in the essences or possibilities, or in the eternal truths, this reality must be founded in something existing and actual, consequently in the existence of the necessary Being, in whom essence includes existence, or with whom it is sufficient to be possible in order to be actual.

45. Thus God alone (or the necessary Being) possesses this privilege, that he must exist if possible; and since nothing can hinder the possibility

of that which includes no bounds, no negation, and consequently no contradiction, that alone is sufficient to establish the existence of God *a priori*. We have likewise proved it by the reality of eternal truths. But we have also just proved it *a posteriori* by showing that, since contingent beings exist, they can have their ultimate and sufficient reason only in some necessary Being, who contains the reason of his existence in himself.

46. Nevertheless, we must not suppose, with some, that eternal verities, being dependent upon God, are arbitrary, and depend upon his will, as Descartes, and afterwards M. Poiret, appear to have conceived. This is true only of contingent truths, the principle of which is fitness, or the choice of the best; whereas necessary truths depend solely on his understanding, and are its internal object.

47. Thus God alone is the primitive Unity, or the simple original substance of which all the created or derived Monads are the products; and they are generated, so to speak, by continual fulgurations of the Divinity, from moment to moment, bounded by the receptivity of the creature, of whose existence limitation is an essential condition.

48. In God is *Power*, which is the source of all; then *Knowledge*, which contains the detail of Ideas; and, finally, *Will*, which generates changes or products according to the principle of optimism.

And this answers to what, in created Monads, constitutes the subject or the basis, the perceptive and the appetitive faculty. But in God these attributes are absolutely infinite or perfect, and in the created Monads or in the Entelechies (or *perfecti habiis*, as Hermolaus Barbarus translates this word), they are only imitations according to the measure of their perfection.

49. The creature is said to act externally in so far as it possesses perfection, and to suffer from another (creature) so far as it is imperfect. So we ascribe action to the Monad so far as it has distinct perceptions, and passion so far as its perceptions are confused.

50. And one creature is more perfect than another in this: that we find in it that which serves to account *a priori* for what passes in the other; and it is therefore said to act upon the other.

51. But in simple substances this is merely an ideal influence of one Monad upon another, which can pass into effect only by the intervention of God, inasmuch as in the ideas of God one Monad has a right to demand that God, in regulating the rest from the commencement of things, shall have regard to it; for since a created Monad can have no physical influence on the interior of another, it is only by this means that one can be dependent on another.

52. And hence it is that actions and passions in creatures are mutual; for God, comparing two simple substances, finds reasons in each which oblige him to accommodate the one to the other. Consequently that which is active in one view is passive in another, — active so far as what we clearly discern in it serves to account for that which takes place in another, and passive so far as the reason of that which passes in it is found in that which is clearly discerned in another.

53. Now as in the ideas of God there is an infinity of possible worlds, and as only one can exist, there must be a sufficient reason for the choice of God, which determines him to one rather than another.

54. And this reason can be no other than fitness, derived from the different degrees of perfection which these worlds contain, each possible world having a claim to exist according to the measure of perfection which it enfolds.

55. And this is the cause of the existence of that Best which the wisdom of God discerns, which his goodness chooses, and his power effects.

56. And this connection, or this accommodation of all created things to each, and of each to all, implies in each simple substance relations which express all the rest. Each, accordingly, is a living and perpetual mirror of the universe.

57. And as the same city viewed from different sides appears quite different, and is perspectively multiplied, so, in the infinite multitude of simple substances, there are given, as it were, so many different worlds, which yet are only the perspectives of a single one, according to the different points of view of each Monad.

58. And this is the way to obtain the greatest possible variety with the greatest possible order,—that is to say, the way to obtain the greatest possible perfection.

59. Thus this hypothesis (which I may venture to pronounce demonstrated) is the only one which properly exhibits the greatness of God. And this Mr. Bayle acknowledges when in his Dictionary (art. *Rorarius*) he objects to it. He is even disposed to think that I attribute too much to God, that I ascribe to him impossibilities; but he can allege no reason for the impossibility of this universal harmony, by which each substance expresses exactly the perfections of all the rest through its relations with them.

60. We see, moreover, in that which I have just stated, the *a priori* reasons why things could not be other than they are. God, in ordering the whole, has respect to each part, and specifically to each Monad, whose nature being representative, is by nothing restrained from representing the whole

of things ; although, it is true, this representation must needs be confused, as it regards the detail of the universe, and can be distinct only in relation to a small part of things, that is, in relation to those which are nearest, or whose relations to any given Monad are greatest. Otherwise each Monad would be a divinity. The Monads are limited, not in the object, but in the mode of their knowledge of the object. They all tend confusedly to the infinite, to the whole ; but they are limited and distinguished by the degrees of distinctness in their perceptions.

61. And compounds symbolize in this with simples. For since the world is a *plenum*, and all matter connected ; and as in a *plenum* every movement has some effect on distant bodies, in proportion to their distance, so that each body is affected not only by those in actual contact with it, and feels in some way all that happens to them, but also through their means is affected by others in contact with those by which it is immediately touched,—it follows that this communication extends to any distance. Consequently, each body feels all that passes in the universe, so that he who sees all, may read in each that which passes everywhere else, and even that which has been and shall be, discerning in the present that which is removed in time as well as in space. *Σύμπνοιει πάντα*, says Hippocrates. But each soul can read

in itself only that which is distinctly represented in it. It cannot unfold its laws at once, for they reach into the infinite.

62. Thus, though every created Monad represents the entire universe, it represents more distinctly the particular body to which it belongs, and whose Entelechy it is; and as this body expresses the entire universe, through the connection of all matter in a *plenum*, the soul represents also the entire universe in representing that body which especially belongs to it.

63. The body belonging to a Monad, which is its Entelechy or soul, constitutes, with its Entelechy, what may be termed a living (thing), and, with its soul, what may be called an animal. And the body of a living being or of an animal is always organic; for every Monad, being a mirror of the universe, according to its fashion, and the universe being arranged with perfect order, there must be the same order in the representative, — that is, in the perceptions of the soul, and consequently of the body according to which the universe is represented in it.

64. Thus each organic living body is a species of divine machine, or a natural automaton, infinitely surpassing all artificial automata. A machine made by human art is not a machine in all its parts. For example, the tooth of a brass wheel

has parts or fragments which are not artificial to us; they have nothing which marks the machine in their relation to the use for which the wheel is designed; but natural machines — that is, living bodies — are still machines in their minutest parts, *ad infinitum*. This makes the difference between nature and art; that is to say, between the divine art and ours.

65. And the Author of Nature was able to exercise this divine and infinitely wonderful art, inasmuch as every portion of nature is not only infinitely divisible, as the ancients knew, but is actually subdivided without end; each part into parts, of which each has its own movement. Otherwise it would be impossible that each portion of matter should express the universe.

66. Whence it appears that there is a world of creatures, of living (things), of animals, of Entelechies, of souls, in the minutest portion of matter.

67. Every particle of matter may be conceived as a garden of plants or as a pond full of fishes. But each branch of each plant, each member of each animal, each drop of their humors, is in turn another such garden or pond.

68. And although the earth and the air embraced between the plants in the garden, or the water between the fishes of the pond, are not themselves

plant or fish, they nevertheless contain such, but mostly too minute for our perception.

69. So there is no uncultured spot, no barrenness, no death in the universe — no chaos, no confusion, except in appearance, as it might seem in a pond at a distance, in which one should see a confused motion and swarming, so to speak, of the fishes of the pond, without distinguishing the fishes themselves.

70. We see, then, that each living body has a governing Entelechy, which in animals is the soul of the animal. But the members of this living body are full of other living bodies, — plants, animals, — each of which has its Entelechy, or regent soul.

71. We must not, however, suppose — as some who misapprehended my thought have done — that each soul has a mass or portion of matter proper to itself, or forever united to it, and that it consequently possesses other inferior living existences, destined forever to its service. For all bodies are in a perpetual flux, like rivers; their particles are continually coming and going.

72. Thus the soul does not change its body except by degrees. It is never deprived at once of all its organs. There are often metamorphoses in animals, but never metempsychosis, — no transmigration of souls. Neither are there souls entirely

separated (from bodies), nor genii without bodies. God alone is wholly without body.

73. For which reason, also, there is never complete generation nor perfect death, — strictly considered, — consisting in the separation of the soul. That which we call generation is development and accretion; and that which we call death is envelopment and diminution.

74. Philosophers have been much troubled about the origin of forms, of Entelechies, or souls. But at the present day, when by accurate investigations of plants, insects, and animals, they have become aware that the organic bodies of nature are never produced from chaos or from putrefaction, but always from seed, in which undoubtedly there had been a *preformation*, — it has been inferred that not only the organic body existed in that seed before conception, but also a soul in that body, — in one word, the animal itself, — and that, by the act of conception, this animal is merely disposed to a grand transformation, to become an animal of another species. We even see something approaching this outside of generation, as when worms become flies, or when caterpillars become butterflies.

75. Those animals of which some are advanced to a higher grade by means of conception, may be called *spermatic*; but those among them which remain in their kind — that is to say, the greater

portion — are born, multiply, and are destroyed, like the larger animals, and only a small number of the elect among them pass to a grander theatre.

76. But this is only half the truth. I have concluded that if the animal does not begin to be in the order of nature, it also does not cease to be in the order of nature, and that not only there is no generation, but no entire destruction, — no death, strictly considered. And these *a posteriori* conclusions, drawn from experience, accord perfectly with my principles deduced *a priori*, as stated above.

77. Thus we may say, not only that the soul (mirror of an indestructible universe) is indestructible, but also the animal itself, although its machine may often perish in part, and put off or put on organic spoils.

78. These principles have furnished me with a natural explanation of the union, or rather the conformity, between the soul and the organized body. The soul follows its proper laws, and the body likewise follows those which are proper to it, and they meet in virtue of the pre-established harmony which exists between all substances, as representations of one and the same universe.

79. Souls act according to the laws of final causes, by appetitions, means and ends; bodies act according to the laws of efficient causes, or the

laws of motion. And the two kingdoms, that of efficient causes and that of final causes, harmonize with each other.

80. Descartes perceived that souls communicate no force to bodies, because the quantity of force in matter is always the same. Nevertheless, he believed that souls might change the direction of bodies. But this was because the world was at that time ignorant of the law of nature which requires the conservation of the same total direction in matter. Had he known this, he would have hit upon my system of pre-established harmony.

81. According to this system, bodies act as if there were no souls, and souls act as if there were no bodies; and yet both act as though the one influenced the other.

82. As to spirits, or rational souls, although I find that at bottom the same principle which I have stated — namely, that animals and souls begin with the world and end only with the world — holds with regard to all animals and living things, yet there is this peculiarity in rational animals, that although their spermatric animacules, as such, have only ordinary or sensitive souls, yet as soon as those of them which are *elected*, so to speak, arrive by the act of conception at human nature, their sensitive souls are elevated to the rank of reason and to the prerogative of spirits.

83. Among other differences which distinguish spirits from ordinary souls, some of which have already been indicated, there is also this : that souls in general are living mirrors or images of the universe of creatures ; but spirits are, furthermore, images of Divinity itself, or of the Author of Nature, capable of cognizing the system of the universe, and of imitating something of it by architectonic experiments, each spirit being, as it were, a little divinity in its own department.

84. Hence spirits are able to enter into a kind of fellowship with God. In their view he is not merely what an inventor is to his machine (as God is in relation to other creatures), but also what a prince is to his subjects, and even what a father is to his children.

85. Whence it is easy to conclude that the assembly of all spirits must constitute the City of God, — that is to say, the most perfect state possible, under the most perfect of monarchs.

86. This City of God, this truly universal monarchy, is a moral world within the natural ; and it is the most exalted and the most divine among the works of God. It is in this that the glory of God most truly consists, which glory would be wanting if his greatness and his goodness were not recognized and admired by spirits. It is in relation to this Divine City that he possesses, prop-

erly speaking, the attribute of *goodness*, whereas his wisdom and his power are everywhere manifest.

87. As we have established above, a perfect harmony between the two natural kingdoms, — the one of efficient causes, the other of final causes, — so it behooves us to notice here also a still further harmony between the physical kingdom of nature and the moral kingdom of grace, — that is to say, between God considered as the architect of the machine of the universe, and God considered as monarch of the divine City of Spirits.

88. This harmony makes all things conduce to grace by natural methods. This globe, for example, must be destroyed and repaired by natural means, at such seasons as the government of spirits may require, for the chastisement of some and the recompense of others.

89. We may say, furthermore, that God as architect contains entirely God as legislator, and that accordingly sins must carry their punishment with them in the order of nature, by virtue even of the mechanical structure of things, and that good deeds in like manner will bring their recompense, through their connection with bodies, although this cannot, and ought not always to, take place on the spot.

90. Finally, under this perfect government there will be no good deed without its recompense, and

no evil deed without its punishment; and all must redound to the advantage of the good — that is to say, of those who are not malecontents — in this great commonwealth, who confide in Providence after having done their duty, and who worthily love and imitate the Author of all good, pleasing themselves with the contemplation of his perfections, following the nature of pure and genuine Love, which makes us blest in the happiness of the loved. In this spirit, the wise and good labor for that which appears to be conformed to the divine will, presumptive or antecedent, contented the while with all that God brings to pass by his secret will, consequent and decisive, — knowing that if we were sufficiently acquainted with the order of the universe we should find that it surpasses all the wishes of the wisest, and that it could not be made better than it is, not only for all in general, but for ourselves in particular, if we are attached, as is fitting, to the Author of All, not only as the architect and efficient cause of our being, but also as our master and the final cause, who should be the whole aim of our volition, and who alone can make us blest.

IMMANUEL KANT.

THE number is small of writers in any line, notably in that of metaphysic, of whom it can be said that the intellectual status of their nation and mankind would be other than it is, had they never written. In this small number we must reckon Kant, who, with a mind incomparably more robust, has been to the nineteenth century what Descartes was to the seventeenth, and what Locke was to the eighteenth.

A tradition which, though vouched by no contemporary documents, has been commonly received, ascribes to Kant a Scotch descent. The professor is said to have been the first who altered the spelling of the name from C to K. Those who are curious in the matter of national traits may please themselves with finding the source of the critical philosophy in the dialectic proclivities of the Scottish blood, as witnessed in Duns, the subtlest of the schoolmen, and Hume, the subtlest of sceptics.

Immanuel Kant was born at Königsberg, a university city in East Prussia, on April 22, 1724.

Pious parents — the father a saddler by trade — intended their boy for the service of the Church. With this destination in view he was sent to the Collegium Fridericianum, a preparatory school, and afterwards matriculated as a student of theology in the university. He is said to have preached a few times in the churches of the neighboring villages; but an early developed habit of independent thought and a craving for intellectual freedom repudiated the mental and ecclesiastical conditions of the clerical office as he found it. The pietism which then prevailed, and in the spirit and fashion of which he had been educated, both at home and at school, — pietism as distinguished from piety, — found no response in his nature; and when the alternative presented itself of the church and spiritual bondage on the one hand, or a secular calling with freedom of thought on the other, he could not hesitate between the two. The stern conscientiousness which that very pietism and his strict bringing up had nurtured in him, sanctioned the choice of the secular way. He devoted himself to the business of teaching and of authorship. He was thoroughly equipped and furnished for his work. The years of preparation in school and university had been profitably spent. In the Fridericianum he had not only acquired a perfect mastery of the Latin, in which several of his treatises

are written, but a thorough acquaintance with the classics, whom he loves to quote. At the university he learned all that was then known in mathematics and physics. Like all great metaphysicians, he was a great mathematician as well.

The height of his ambition was to fill a professor's chair in the university of his native city. But many years elapsed before this dream was fulfilled. Nine of them were spent in the humble office of private tutor in different families, the last of which, that of Count Kayserling, introduced him to the best society in Königsberg. In 1755 he was able to defray the expense of the degree of Magister Philosophiæ, which included the privilege of lecturing in the philosophical department of the university, and the chance of promotion whenever a vacant professorship should offer. He lectured first on mathematics and physics, then on logic and metaphysic, then on moral philosophy, on natural theology, and physical geography. His lectures, thanks to a mind well stored with various knowledge, and a wide intellectual horizon, were popular, in spite of the puny figure and feeble voice of the lecturer. They were largely attended by hearers outside of the academic pale. Russian officers quartered in Königsberg during the Seven Years' War manifested a special interest in the course on physical geography.

Naturally shy, and lecturing without notes, he was apt to be embarrassed when anything unusual occurred. A peculiar costume in one of the assembly would put him out. His custom was to fix his eye on some individual who sat near, and to speak as if addressing him alone. On one occasion, it is said, the individual addressed chanced to have a button wanting on his coat; the lecturer's eye was fascinated by the hiatus: and this trivial circumstance so confused him that with difficulty he struggled through the hour.

The first professorship which fell vacant was awarded to an elder magister. It was precisely the one which Kant had coveted, the professorship of logic and metaphysic. The next vacancy which occurred was that of professor of poetry. It was offered to Kant, with but slight regard, it would seem, to any internal vocation on the part of the nominee. Had nothing more been required than to lecture on the nature, history, and laws of poetry, a fitter candidate could not have been found. But the office involved the necessity of writing poems to order, occasional poems on the birthdays of the royal family, and other events of the year, which Kant conceived to be somewhat out of the line of his calling. He was more at home with the ancient poets than with the modern. Among the latter his favorites were Haller, whose scientific

attainments promised sound thought, if nothing else, and Pope, whose principal poem bore in its title a recommendation to the philosophic essayist. At length, in 1770, the incumbent of the coveted professorship was transferred to another, and Kant was called to the vacant place, with a salary of four hundred thaler.¹ At the age of forty-six, having already declined invitations, with ampler emoluments, from other universities, in favor of his native city, he took the chair of logic and metaphysic in the university of Königsberg, and held it until his death, in 1804, at the age of eighty.

Of so remarkable a man,—one of the greatest of German births, confessedly the foremost thinker of modern time,—one desires to know something of the person and manner of being, as vouched by cotemporary witnesses.

A puny figure, scarce five feet high, thin and meagre to the last degree, an ample forehead, an elegantly shaped nose, well-opened, meditative eyes, whose expression was contradicted by thick lips suggesting delight in the pleasures of the table, composed the exterior semblance of this king of men. In the Walhalla at Regensburg his bust

¹ This was afterwards increased to six hundred and twenty; and out of this small income, plus the profits of his works, he managed to save 21,530 thaler for his heirs.

appeared to me on a cursory view the most insignificant in that august assembly of German worthies, to none of whom was he second in majesty of mind.

Stronger in no man was the sense of personal independence. Not to forfeit that independence by pecuniary obligation, through the poverty and amid the struggles of early manhood, was a problem which demanded heroic self-denial. Kant endured the ordeal with stern resolution, never allowing himself an unnecessary expenditure, never accepting a pecuniary favor, and never owing a penny. When the pinch of poverty appeared in his garments, his friends would gladly have replenished his wardrobe; but he repelled the offer, and continued to wear his threadbare coat until his own earnings could procure him a new one. He exemplified the practical philosophy enjoined in Emerson's couplet:—

“The sources wouldst thou stop of every ill,
Pay every debt as if God brought the bill.”

Next to keeping out of debt, and partly in order to that, was the pressing obligation to keep himself in working order. So fragile a body required the uttermost care to prevent its becoming a helpless incumbrance instead of a serviceable tool. This he clearly discerned in early life, and governed himself accordingly. With some knowledge of

anatomy, he studied his physical constitution as a pathological problem, and erected on that study a system of hygiene whose main points were to strengthen what was weak by temperance and exercise, and to ignore what was incurable. A narrow chest induced a sense of oppression at the heart which no mechanical appliance would relieve, and which tended to melancholy and hypochondria. Since the cause could not be removed, the effect must be guarded against; and this he accomplished by force of will, by steadfastly refusing to dwell on it, to recognize it in his thought. He wrote a treatise, suggested and illustrated by his own experience, on the power of the mind by mere determination of the will to master morbid feelings. In that essay he relates how by the exercise of his will he overcame a chronic cough of long standing, how he forced himself to breathe through the nose, how he broke up a habit of wakefulness, and compelled sleep by compulsory adjournment of mental action. There was never perhaps a more remarkable instance of a body preserved by the mind, of life prolonged by will. With such a physique a weak-minded or less intellectual man would have died before the age of thirty; Kant kept himself living to the age of eighty.

Uniformity of life was one, and a very essential, factor in this result. Mechanically regular in all

his habits, he rose every morning, winter and summer, at five, and went to bed at ten. The time from five to seven was spent in study, — the cup of coffee on which he broke his fast not interrupting his work. From seven to nine he lectured, from nine to one he wrote. At one he dined; if possible, always with invited guests. The dinner was no hasty repast, but a well-considered, deliberate affair, occupying never less than two hours. This was his season of recreation, when he “gave to pleasure all his mighty mind.” His varied information, his wealth of anecdote, his inexhaustible humor, were called into play for his own refreshment and the entertainment of his guests.

That he was a bachelor goes without saying. Such a mind must be free from domestic cares. It ought, however, to be said that, as a brother, he was a true and generous friend to his sisters, aiding them with counsel and money according to their need. Punctually at four o'clock in the summer, and half-past three in the winter, he donned his cocked hat, girded on his sword, the appendage then of the gentleman, seized his rattan, and started for a walk in the suburbs, in a path still named for him “the philosopher’s walk.” It was said that the burghers on the route set their timepieces by him as he passed. An hour was spent in walking up and down the Mall, in which he avoided

companionship, in order that the full benefit of the exercise might lose nothing by the tax of conversation. The walk being ended, the time which remained until candle-light was spent in social converse or in meditation, and then, until bedtime, in reading and preparation for the next day's lectures.

This programme he maintained for thirty years, until advanced age necessitated abridgment of the hours of labor. Any break in this routine he felt as a calamity. On one occasion, returning from the daily walk, he was met by a nobleman of his acquaintance driving a smart span of horses, and was courteously invited to take a seat in his phaeton. Obeying a momentary impulse of friendly acquiescence, the philosopher complied; and repented too late, when the spirited conduct of the beasts, and what seemed to him their exorbitant speed, suggested to his inexperience visions of a broken neck and an end of philosophizing. The drive was a long one; a friend residing at a distance from the city had to be visited; and when at length our professor was set down, late in the evening, at his own door, thoroughly demoralized and vexed with himself, he hastened to inscribe for future guidance, in his diary, as a life-maxim, never to mount a vehicle which he had not himself hired, and of which he had not the control. This rule,

once established, no power on earth could tempt him to violate.

Perfect quiet he found to be essential to his mental operations; no train of thought could be carried on without it. Noises of all kinds were an abomination to him; he repeatedly changed his lodgings to escape them. In one street, along the Pregel, it was the noise of the marine. The "yo-heave-oh" of the seamen, however it might speed their craft, prevented his from getting fairly under way. In his next settlement a neighbor's cock was addicted to much crowing. Instant in season and out of season, the bird defied him. He offered to purchase it at any price; but the owner would not part with it, and Kant was obliged to leave. He finally purchased a small tenement in the neighborhood of the Castle, away from the din of the city; and there he thought himself safe. But the city jail was inconveniently near; and when the windows were open, the singing of psalms, in which the prisoners were encouraged to engage for their edification, aroused in the solitary student quite other feelings than those which dictated the sacred melodies. In a letter to his friend the burgo-master, who had *ex officio* the oversight of such institutions, he protested against these stentorian devotions, in which he detected an unsanctified purpose, and expressed his belief that the souls

of the convicts would take no detriment if their voices were modulated to the customary pitch with which religious households in the city conducted their spiritual exercises. The nuisance was abated ; but another annoyance, of the opposite sort, he had to suffer, from bands of music which played for occasional parties in the neighborhood. It was this experience, perhaps, that led him to characterize music as an "obtrusive art." Any change in his surroundings acted with disturbing force on his thoughts. In his evening meditations he was helped by fixing his eye on some stationary object ; it prevented the wandering of the mind. A certain tower, the Löbenicht tower, visible from his study window, had served him in this capacity. The distance was exactly suited to his eye, and he often spoke with satisfaction of the aid he had found in it ; but the poplars in his neighbor's yard grew, and shut out the friendly object. For want of it his ratiocination halted ; and who can say what precious conclusions the world would have lost, had not his neighbor kindly consented to lop the tall trees in the interest of philosophy ?

It was not from any want of social sympathy that he lived a bachelor, nor from any aversion to women, whose conversation he enjoyed so long as they abstained from learned topics ; but simply because there seemed to be no place in his life-plan

where a wife would fit. In one of his table-talks, when the conversation turned on the duties of women, Kant expressed his high estimate of feminine influence, and spoke of virtues to be cultivated and faults to be avoided. "A woman," he said, "should be like the church clock, she should have an open countenance, and be punctual in her habits ; but, on the other hand, she should not, like the church clock, tell the public all she knows." Again, "she should be like the snail, domestic ; but not like the snail, carry all her property on her back."

A well-meaning, pragmatical clergyman of his acquaintance urged him to marry, and wrote for his special edification a treatise setting forth the propriety of wedlock as being, according to Scripture, an honorable estate, and well pleasing in the sight of God. Kant thanked him civilly for his advice, and remained celibate. He had turned the matter over in his thoughts. There was one occasion when he seriously debated with himself the question of the dual economy. There came to Königsberg, on a visit to her friends, a young and comely widow, who manifested a special pleasure in his society, and to whom he was strongly attracted. But a question of conscience gave him pause. Was he justified, with his limited means, in undertaking the pecuniary burden of wedlock ? And while he was measuring his income with the

probable expense of a family, the widow gave herself, for better or worse, to a less deliberate wooer. But Kant was the best of friends, helpful with purse as well as counsel, where help was needed.

One of his intimates was an Englishman by the name of Green. Their first encounter was ill-omened, and threatened life-long enmity. It was at the breaking out of the American War of Independence. Even in that remote corner of Germany our revolt was the topic of the day. Kant embraced with ardor the American side; and on one occasion, at a party where Green, then unknown to him, was present, he was defending with great animation the action of the Colonies, when the Englishman started up and declared in a towering passion that he considered the gentleman's remarks as an insult to his country, and consequently to himself as the representative of that country, for which he demanded satisfaction. The philosopher kept his temper; and, disclaiming any disrespect to England, argued the question on general principles with such calmness and good sense, and such thorough mastery of the case, that Green was ashamed of his heat, and begged Kant's pardon. At parting they shook hands, and desired each other's nearer acquaintance. The acquaintance soon ripened into close friendship, which lasted through life. Green was a notable char-

acter, a man after Kant's own heart. To the sturdy independence and self-poise of an Englishman he seems to have united an exceptional intelligence. It is said that Kant consulted him even on questions of philosophy, and submitted his works to his friend before sending them to the press. A common friend of the two was the bank-director Ruffmann; and associated with these was a fourth, who was also an Englishman, or rather a Scotchman, Motherby. The four were in the habit of spending some portion of their afternoons together at the house of Green. Jachmann, one of Kant's biographers, gives an amusing account of these meetings. First, Kant, returning from his daily walk, would enter Green's room, and, finding him asleep in his easy chair, would sit down by his side and begin to brood over some metaphysical problem, until he also fell asleep. Then came Ruffmann, and seeing the situation, composed himself in like manner for an afternoon nap; until, finally, Motherby, according to appointment, joined the trio and waked them up; after which they engaged in conversation until seven. The hour of separation was so punctually observed that dwellers on the street would say: "It is seven o'clock; Professor Kant has just come from Green's!"

I have spoken of Kant as he was in his prime. The habits of his manhood were greatly modified

in his latter years by the creeping infirmities of age. A rigorous hygiene could bring him to his eightieth birthday ; but no hygiene could stave off the labor and trouble which the Hebrew moralist assigns to the eighth decade of our mortality. As life drew near to its close, the hours of rest were prolonged, the hours of labor were abridged. For some time before his death he had been forced to forego his customary recreations as well as his formal tasks. His eyesight failed him, one eye having already lost its speculation in his better days. His limbs refused their office ; he fell in walking, and he fell when he stood. Of his last year the greater portion was spent in bed.

One satisfaction alone, one luxury, remained to him, and that he indulged without stint, — the luxury of kindness. The savings from his annual income, to which, after he became famous, were added the profits of his works, had in the course of years, under the skilful handling of his financial friend, Green, amounted to what in those days, for a scholar especially, was a handsome property. Of this he gave yearly a sum nearly equal to the whole of his stipend in charity. Next to his poor relatives, the persons assisted by him were chiefly indigent students and families, once comfortable, whom mischance had deprived of the means of support. One of the last sayings recorded of him

is that he would be grateful to any one who would put him in the way of doing a kind deed.

With the beginning of February, 1804, his vitality declined with so rapid an ebb that friends were daily expecting to hear of his decease; yet when, on the 12th of that month, the final event was announced, the community through all its ranks experienced a shock such as probably no other death had caused within the memory of men then living. Kant was the cherished jewel of the city and the land.

“It seemed beyond the common lawful sway
Of death and nature o’er our kind,
That such a one as he should pass away,
And aught be left behind.”

Reverent thousands flocked to his obsequies; his knell was rung from every tower; students, the pupils of his pupils, formed a guard of honor around his bier. The University mourned her greatest son, and in due season called her children together from far and near to celebrate his praise.

I have said that Kant was made Professor of Logic and Metaphysic in 1770, at the age of forty-six. Beyond the walls of Königsberg he was but little known until, in 1781, he gave to the world the work which drew to him the regards of the

learned in all the dominions of Germany. Even of this, the most important of his works, the "*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*," the renown was not a rapid growth. Important as it proved to be in the end, it may almost be said to have been stillborn. Though known to a few who knew the author from his previous writings, nine years elapsed before it conquered for itself a wide repute. In Germany, more perhaps than in any other country, the universities decide the claims and fortunes of philosophic writings, and the universities were long in discovering the immense significance of this audacious work; but when discovered, the intelligence spread with electric rapidity, until all the universities were aglow with it, and adopted the "*Kritik*" as the basis or the text of their philosophic teaching. And — what is remarkable — the Catholic universities were no whit behind, but in many cases led the Protestant in this reform. Würzburg, Mainz, Heidelberg, Ingoldstadt, Erfurt, Bamberg, vied with Halle, Jena, Erlangen, Leipsic, Göttingen, Marburg, and Gießen. And so it came to pass that, when verging on threescore and ten, Kant found himself suddenly raised from merely local honors to the pinnacle of national fame.

I shall not undertake a complete exposition of the Kantian philosophy, nor presume to pass judg-

ment upon it. The most I can do is to indicate its starting-point and some of its fundamental positions. The title "Critical Philosophy," embracing "Kritik der reinen Vernunft," "Kritik der praktischen Vernunft," and "Kritik der Urtheilskraft," must be interpreted — especially as regards the first of these treatises — with reference to the so-called dogmatic philosophy of Wolff, which had possession of the field when Kant began his labors, and in part also to the scepticism of Hume, which appeared as the legitimate outcome of the sensuous philosophy of Locke.

Christian Wolff, born 1679, was the first German philosopher who wrote in the German language, and thereby secured to himself a constituency beyond the circle of professional scholars. He made philosophy a popular interest, and his own philosophy the accepted doctrine of his time. Erdmann calls him the creator of German philosophical diction. In Halle, where he occupied a chair in the university, and where the novelty of philosophy in German drew large audiences, the bigotry of the theological faculty, and their influence with the civil authority, procured, in 1723, an edict from Frederick William, then king of Prussia, by which Wolff was not only deposed from office, but commanded, on pain of the gallows, to leave the country within forty-eight hours. He did

not wait the expiration of that term, but fled immediately to Marburg, in Hesse-Cassel, seat of the earliest Protestant university, to which he had previously received a call, and where the persistent machinations of his orthodox persecutors were defeated by a more liberal and enlightened government. Meanwhile in Prussia his works were confiscated ; imprisonment for life decreed for all who should harbor them. With the accession of Frederick II. religious bigotry lost the support of the temporal power, the edict of banishment was revoked, and Wolff returned to Halle, where, reinstated in his former professorship, he spent the remainder of his days ; but where, it is said, he did not recover his former popularity, having nothing new to offer, and being unable to compete with younger talent. The interest in him ceased with the persecution of his enemies ; and when a commission, appointed for the purpose, had pronounced his philosophy safe, it somehow lost its attraction for the curious youth of the university.

Wolff's system is eclectic, based mainly on that of Leibniz, advancing nothing new in the way of first principles, but only modifying the doctrines of his predecessors. It was termed the "dogmatic philosophy," as building, on certain assumed premises, a system of doctrine concerning all topics of philosophic inquiry, correctly enough reasoned.

were only the foundations secure. Kant, in the Introduction to the second edition of the "*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*," praises his method, calls him the greatest of dogmatic philosophers, and says he has shown us by his procedure what is the true, safe course of metaphysic, had it only occurred to him to first prepare the ground by critical examination of the organ of metaphysic, that is, of pure reason itself. This defect of the dogmatic philosophy it is the aim of the critical philosophy to supply.

On the other hand, Hume, antipodal to Wolff, — Hume, the arch-sceptic, assuming, after Locke, that all our conclusions, the whole body of our knowledge, is directly or indirectly the product of the senses, had called in question the validity of that knowledge, by showing that our inferences from sensuous experience rest solely on mental habit, and not on demonstration or any ground of pure reason; that we have no valid reason for supposing that the same antecedents will always be followed by the same results, or like conditions by like consequences, according to an assumed law of cause and effect. Because the sun has risen hitherto at stated intervals, we have no reason for supposing that therefore it will rise to-morrow, or that because heavy bodies, unsupported, have used to fall to the ground, they will therefore continue to do so. The belief in such continuance may

answer all practical purposes, but it furnishes no basis of metaphysical science. We have no right to speak of causation ; all we know is succession of events. This scepticism, which struck at the root of all knowledge, Kant endeavored to meet by controverting the fundamental position of Locke and his followers as to the origin of our ideas. He impugned the genetic order affirmed by that philosophy. So far from being true that mental perceptions are derived from sensuous experience, he maintained, on the contrary, that sensuous experience is conditioned by the mind. Hume had said that our ideas are copies of sensible impressions. Kant said, No ! Sensible impressions themselves are the product of ideas, that is, of forms of thought inherent in the mind. It has hitherto been assumed that cognition must conform to its objects ; but all attempts to determine anything concerning them *a priori* by means of concepts have been nullified by this presumption. Let us therefore see whether in metaphysical problems we may not succeed better by assuming that objects conform to our cognitions.

Objects conform to our cognitions ? What does that mean ? It means that our cognition determines the objects we perceive ; in other words, determines our perceptions. If our cognitions were different, the supposed objects would be different.

On what, then, does cognition depend? It depends on the constitution of the mind. If we see things thus or thus, it is because our minds are thus or thus constituted, with such and such laws and modes of action. The vulgar notion is that our senses by their immediate action give us the objects we perceive, precisely as we perceive them; that is found to be an error. The senses give us no perceptions, but only sensations, simple or complex. How, then, do we get our perceptions of an external world? The understanding manipulates, if I may use the term in this connection, the given sensations according to certain ideas, laws, and modes of working inherent in its constitution, which Kant calls *Categories*; of which there are twelve. By these it distinguishes, defines, measures, arranges, and so creates the perceptions, which are vulgarly supposed to be transcripts of external objects, but which, in fact, are the product of our own minds. What may be the character of the objects themselves, says Kant, independently of our perceptions, we can never know. We know only our manner of perceiving them; that manner is peculiar to us, and may not be the same in other beings. Though we attain to the uttermost clearness in our perceptions, they bring us no nearer to the nature of things as they are in themselves; we only attain to more perfect knowledge of our own

sensuous capacity, under the conditions of space and time, which have their origin in ourselves. There are two factors in our cognition which perhaps have a common, unknown root, — sensibility and understanding. The former furnishes the objects of our knowledge; the other thinks them into shape, — *i. e.*, shapes them into concepts. The understanding has no faculty of seeing things; sensibility has no power of thinking them: only when the two combine in brotherly union is cognition effected, and from cognition experience.

In maintaining that we know nothing, and can know nothing, of things without us as they exist in themselves, was Kant an Idealist? Not in the sense of Berkeley. He earnestly disclaims the charge of such idealism. “Never,” he says, “has it entered my mind to doubt the existence of things without us, but only whether the sensuous presentation of things gives us any true knowledge of things as they are in themselves.” The second edition of the “*Kritik*” contains a “Refutation of Idealism,” in which the author maintains that the existence of things external to us is absolutely necessary to any definite consciousness of our own existence. The experiential consciousness of my own existence is itself only an indirect one; that is, possible only by means of external experience. Again, in the “*Prolegomena to every Future*

Metaphysic," he thus distinguishes between his own position and that of the Idealists. He says :—

"The allegation of all Idealists is contained in this formula : All cognition through the senses and through experience is mere appearance ; truth is to be found only in the ideas of the pure understanding and pure reason. The principle, on the contrary, which governs *my* formal, or better, critical, idealism, is that all cognition from pure understanding, or pure reason alone, is mere appearance, and that truth is to be found only in experience."

The distinction is a very subtle one, and a critic might object that to deny that we see the real thing is after all a kind of idealism. Berkeley himself admits external reality. There is something distinct from ourselves which causes us to see things, — *i. e.*, gives us ideas of an external world ; that something is God, who impresses these ideas on the mind. According to Kant, there *are things* which furnish the ground of our perceptions ; but what they are we can never know. We do not perceive *them*, but only our own *Vorstellungen*.

This is the doctrine of the first part of the "*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*." Its outcome is that all knowledge originates in experience ; but experience is something of which our own understanding is the principal factor.

The second part is occupied with the examination

of those ideas and beliefs which transcend the reach of sensible experience. Here our philosopher, with that uncompromising, inexorable logic which procured for him the *sobriquet* of "Der Alleszermalmende," "The All-to-pieces-crushing," proceeds to show that pure reason can never, by legitimate exercise of its function, establish the reality of those objects which lie beyond the reach of experience, — God, immortality, an infinite universe. Its legitimate office is to promote completeness in the action of the understanding as applied to the series of phenomena, to extend indefinitely the use of experience. Its *practical* use is, by means of its ideas (God, immortality, etc.), to gain room for moral principles outside of actual knowledge. This may explain the inborn transcendental aspiration of human reason. This transcendental aspiration has for its objects three ideas, — a psychological, a cosmological, and a theological; the idea of the soul as an independent, self-existent, continuous, indestructible entity; the idea of an infinite cosmos, and the idea of an extramundane, personal God.

In relation to the first, the attempt to verify it logically results in sophisms. All that is affirmed of the soul is based on the proposition, "I am." This of itself means nothing; it is simply a necessary form of presentation, a consciousness which

attends all our thinking, as condition or substratum. Nothing is represented by this "I," to which we refer all our thinking, nothing of which, independently of the contents of our thought, we can form the least conception. We go about it with our reasoning in a perpetual circle; we make use of the idea itself to determine what it is. The "I" cannot get outside of the "I" to judge of it. The question concerning the nature of this something, which is unthinkable except by itself, is nugatory, seeing that it lies outside of all possible experience.

In relation to the second, or cosmological, idea, reason entangles itself with insoluble contradictions, or what Kant calls "antinomies." He enumerates four propositions, of which the affirmative and the negative are equally true and equally false; *i. e.*, equally capable of demonstration and of refutation. 1. The world had a beginning in time, and is bounded in space. On the contrary, the world is without beginning, and without bounds. 2. All matter consists of simples, and of compounds formed of these simples. On the contrary, there is no simple, but all matter is infinitely divisible. 3. Causation according to natural laws is not the only cause from which the phenomena of the world are derived; they require for their explanation the supposition of a free, *i. e.*, an uncaused,

cause. On the contrary, there is no freedom ; everything in the world is the product of natural laws. 4. In the series of world-causes there is an absolutely necessary Being. On the contrary, there is no necessary being, either in or without the world, to which its origin is to be ascribed. From these contradictory propositions, each of which is equally defensible on the ground of concepts furnished by the understanding, and equally beyond the reach of experience, it is inferred that the cosmological questions involved in them are indeterminable by pure reason.

And now, finally, in relation to the third, the theological idea, it is shown that Reason transcends her legitimate office when, from the notion of an All-Perfect, — the sum of all possibility, — she proceeds to infer the existence of an object corresponding to that notion, which we call God, and demands that this creation of human thought shall be accepted as an actually existent Being, given us prior to, and independent of, our thought.

From this brief account of its main points, it appears that the aim of Kant's critique is to demonstrate the impossibility of acquiring by legitimate use of reason any knowledge of things beyond the reach of experience. And Kant himself confesses that "the chief, and perhaps the only, use of a philosophy of pure reason is a negative one. It

is not an organon for extending, but a discipline for limiting! Instead of discovering truth, its modest function is to guard against error."

Are we to infer from the result of his *Kritik* that Kant intended to deny or to call in question, or that, as a man, he disbelieved those fundamental truths which, as a philosopher, he pronounces indemonstrable? The conclusion does not seem to me authorized by what we know of Kant from other sources. His object was to combat the dogmatism of the current philosophy, which had reared an elaborate system, a showy edifice, on insufficient foundations, — theological assumptions which, however valid in religion, are inadmissible in philosophy until logically verified. To say that a doctrine is not proved is a very different thing from saying that the doctrine is not true.

In the second edition of the "*Kritik*," which followed the first after an interval of six years, the author made important changes, omitting a portion of the old matter, and inserting new. The tendency of these changes is conservative, and suggests a retraction of the bolder positions of the original work. Schopenhauer, though an ardent admirer of Kant, ascribes them to senile timidity, fear of incurring the censure, perhaps the persecution, of civil authority. Frederick the Great, the defender of religious liberty, had died; and his

successor, a very different spirit, was known to look with disfavor on all that militated against the traditional faith. That Kant was influenced by this consideration I am unwilling to believe. That during the six years his views may have undergone some modification is not improbable. In the Introduction to his second edition he excuses the negations of his "Kritik" with these remarkable words: "*I had to give up knowledge in order to make room for faith.*" And in his next great work, the "Kritik der praktischen Vernunft," he says that Pure Reason, in her practical endeavor, — *i. e.*, the endeavor to establish moral obligation, — is compelled to assume God and immortality, in order that her purely moral precepts may commend themselves as something more than crotchets of the brain; and so he seems to give back to practical reason what he had taken from speculative. If moral obligation presupposes God and immortality, then the certainty of the latter is vouched by that of the former.

Heinrich Heine, after his fashion, represents this latter treatise as a resuscitation of the deism which the former treatise had put to death. He asks: —

"Did Kant undertake this resuscitation, not merely on account of old Lampe [Kant's servant, who needed a God], but also on account of the police? Or did he really act from conviction? Did he destroy the proofs of

the existence of God merely to show us how bad it is to be without a God? In that case he acted as wisely as my Westphalian friend, who smashed all the street-lamps on the Grohnde Street in Göttingen, and then, standing there in the dark, preached to us a long sermon on the practical necessity of street-lamps, which he had theoretically destroyed, only to show us that we could see nothing without them."

The "*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*," embracing the "*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*" (Foundation of the Metaphysic of Morals), contains Kant's ethical system, of which the distinguishing feature is its absolutism. He insists on the autonomy of the will. The will must be governed by no motive but the categorical imperative; it must determine itself in conformity with the moral law, irrespective not only of any gain to the actor, but of all personal considerations, of all consequences that are to ensue from our action. For example, we must do good to others, not for the sake of others, but for the sake of the good we are commanded to do. "Act as if the maxim of your action could by your will become a universal law of nature." In the "*Tugendlehre*" (Doctrine of Virtue), which is given as a separate treatise, but properly forms a part of his ethical system, he lays down the law that ethical duties are not to be estimated by our (supposed) ability to satisfy the law,

but, on the contrary, moral ability is to be estimated by the law which commands categorically, consequently, not according to the empirical knowledge we have of mankind as they are, but according to the rational knowledge of mankind as they should be, conformably to the idea of humanity. In other words, duty is not to be measured by ability, but ability by duty. I can, because I must.

Next to the two works which have been named, — the “*Kritik of Pure Reason*,” and the “*Kritik of Practical Reason*,” — the best known, and perhaps of all Kant’s writings the most approved, is the “*Kritik der Urtheilskraft*” (*Critique of the Faculty of Judging*). This treatise consists of two parts. The first discusses æsthetic judgments, or the principles of taste; the second treats of teleological judgments, or judgments which affirm design in the forms and relations of organic life. The design which we find in nature, he maintains, is nothing inherent in the objects, but only our way of looking at them, — a necessity of the human mind to impute design where it sees fitness in the relation of part to part. Kant has written nothing more original and incisive than this treatise. Schelling says of one of its sections¹ that “never

¹ The seventy-sixth: “Concerning that Peculiarity of the Human Understanding which enables us to form the Idea of Purpose in Nature.”

perhaps were so many profound thoughts crowded into so few pages."

Among the more important of Kant's works besides the three which have been mentioned, are his physical and geographical treatises; his "Logic;" his "Only Possible Demonstration of the Being of God;" his "Religion within the Bounds of Reason;" his "Philosophy of History;" and his "Anthropology." All these bear the stamp of his peculiar genius, — rich in original thought, and profoundly suggestive; but I must content myself with simply naming them.

I have indicated some of the positions of the Kantian philosophy. The net result and value of that philosophy it is not my intention to discuss. I will only observe that the value of any system of metaphysic must be sought, not in positive additions to human knowledge, not in revelations of unquestionable truths, discoveries which no subsequent criticism shall overthrow, but in the impulse it gives to thought, in the light it throws on the deepest questions of the soul, in the prospect it opens of new fields of inquiry. Some of Kant's doctrines, and notably that of space and time as connate forms of perception, and of certain concepts as given forms of thought antecedent to all experience, are rejected by later and more exhaustive psychology: but many of his views still hold

their place, and his spirit still lives ; the movement which he inaugurated is still in progress.

The noble army of metaphysicians to whom Germany has given birth since the appearance of the "Critique of Pure Reason," and which no nation can match with so numerous and bright an array, including Fichte, Fries, Reinhold, Krause, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and many more, are Kant's spiritual offspring, and own the lineage of that master mind. The nature of the influence he exerted on German literature outside of the province of philosophy proper, it is difficult to define ; but the fact of that influence is unmistakable. It is due not so much to any doctrine of his teaching, as it is to the lift which he gave to the national mind. Schiller, it is well known, was a zealous student of Kant, and owed to that study the direction of his thought as expressed in his philosophical essays. In a letter inviting Kant to contribute to the "Horen" he says : "Accept, in conclusion, the assurance of my liveliest gratitude for the beneficent light which you have kindled in my mind, — a gratitude which, like the gift on which it is grounded, is without bounds and imperishable." Jean Paul wrote in 1788 to his friend Vogel : "For Heaven's sake purchase for yourself two books : Kant's 'Grundlegung zu einer Metaphysik der Sitten,' and Kant's 'Kritik der praktischen

Vernunft.' Kant is not so much *a* light of the world as he is a whole beaming solar system at once." Goethe confesses his indebtedness to the "Kritik der Urtheilskraft" for a very joyful epoch of his life; and in answer to a question of Eckermann, "Whom do you regard as the greatest of modern philosophers?" he answered, "Kant, beyond all doubt. He is also the one whose doctrine has shown a continuing efficacy, and has penetrated most deeply our German culture. He has influenced you too, although you have never read him. Now you do not need to read him, for you already possess what he could give you." Wilhelm von Humboldt, one of the finest spirits of his day, bears this testimony:—

"Kant undertook and accomplished the greatest work that perhaps the philosophy of reason ever owed to a single individual. . . . Vastness and power of imagination are in him associated with acuteness and depth of thought. How much or how little of the Kantian philosophy has maintained itself to this day, or will maintain itself in time to come, I do not assume to decide. But three things remain as witnesses of the glory he has conferred on his nation, and the service he has rendered to speculative thought. Somewhat that he has demolished will never assert itself again; somewhat that he has founded will never perish; and — what is most important — he has established a reform to which few in the history of philosophy can be compared. . . . It was not so much

/ philosophy that he taught, as the way to philosophize. He did not so much communicate new discoveries as he lighted the torch of independent search. Thus he has given rise to systems and schools more or less divergent from his own. And this is characteristic of the lofty freedom of his spirit, that he was able to start other philosophies, which also, in perfect freedom, work on for themselves in self-created ways."

I R O N Y.

[From the "Atlantic Monthly," October, 1870.]

EMANUEL SWEDENBORG, reviving a doctrine of Origen, professed to have discovered in the sacred writings of the Hebrews this peculiarity, distinguishing it from other literatures, that, besides what the authors seem to say, — above or beneath the obvious meaning of the terms employed, — they say something else and very different. If the Swedish theosopher is right in this view of them, the Hebrew Scriptures excel in the quality of irony. Not that the writers themselves "palter with us in a double sense." The writers themselves are supposed to be unconscious of the trailing mystery accompanying their earnest speech. But a spirit more subtle than the writer, lurking behind the pen, plays hide-and-seek with the reader. It sounds odd to speak of the Bible as the literature of irony, but, according to this view, it possesses that quality in an eminent degree. For the essence of literary irony consists in the "something behind," a spirit, a meaning, not wholly expressed in the literal sense of the writing. "Irony of the spirit" we may term this species.

The Irony of Passion. — The principle of irony must have a deep foundation in human nature, so universal is its manifestation, so diverse and opposite the moods of mind that in it find their fit expression. Joy, sorrow, love, hate, — all ironize. It is the native idiom of all passion which thus ekes out its imperfect utterance by drawing on its opposite. Excessive joy, no less than grief, finds vent in tears, and is ready to die of its own fulness. “If it were now to die,” says Othello,

“’T were now to be most happy ; for I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute,
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.”

On the other hand, overwhelming sorrow, no less than joy, disposes to mirth. Hamlet, stunned with grief and rage by the recent revelations of his father’s ghost, summons his companions with the “Hillo, ho, ho, boy ! come, bird, come !” of the falconer, and confides to Horatio, on promise of the strictest secrecy, the astounding fact that “there’s ne’er a villain in all Denmark, but he’s an arrant knave.” The backwoodsman, when, returning from his day’s work, he finds that his whole family have been murdered by the Indians, says, “It’s too ridiculous !” and laughs, and dies.

Love delights in minifying, and even disparaging, terms of endearment, and often teases by way of

blandishment: "Excellent *wretch!* . . . but I do love thee." And often intense hatred borrows the vocabulary of praise.

Irony as Satire. — Irony, as commonly understood, is criticism by contraries. Emphasis is given to the real thought of the speaker by contrast with the thought professed; as when, in answer to Dalila's complaint that

"In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause,"

Samson Agonistes retorts,

"For want of words, no doubt, or lack of breath."

A favorite kind of rhetorical irony is that of warning cloaked as pretended recommendation. Hoffmann's serious admonition to stage-managers and scene-shifters, after the model of Swift's advice to servants, is a happy instance. The writer warns them that poets and actors have conspired to deceive honest people and make them believe that what they witness on the stage is actual events and persons, much to the prejudice of their understandings and their peace of mind; that consequently they, the managers and scene-shifters, are in duty bound, so far as in them lies, to frustrate this nefarious design, and to counteract the intended illusion.

"To this end, let them occasionally insert the wrong scene or drop the wrong curtain. In a scene representing

a gloomy cave, let a little piece of the saloon behind appear, so that when the *prima donna* bewails in touching strains her cruel imprisonment, the spectator may listen undisturbed, knowing that the machinist has only to ring the bell, and the gloomy prison will disappear, and the friendly saloon take its place. A very good device is, suddenly, in the midst of a lugubrious chorus, at the very moment of intensest interest, to let fall, as if by accident, a drop-scene, separating the actors, so that a portion of those in the background shall be cut off from their interlocutors in the proscenium. . . . I remember," he says, "seeing this measure employed with great effect, although with some incorrectness in the application, in a ballet. The *prima ballerina* was executing a beautiful *sola*. Just as she was pausing for a moment in a splendid attitude, and while the spectators, crazy with delight, were shouting and clapping, the machinist suddenly let fall a drop-scene which shut her off from public view. But unfortunately the drop-scene was a drawing-room with a great door in the middle, and before one was aware, the resolute *danseuse* came hopping through the door, and continued her *sola*. See to it, therefore, that your drop-scene on such occasions has no door."¹

English literature, second to none in humorous satire, has many choice bits of rhetorical irony. The following is from Martinus Scriblerus on the Art of Sinking in Poetry :—

"When I consider, my dear countrymen, the extent, fertility, and populousness of our Lowlands of Parnassus, the flourishing state of our trade, and the plenty of our

¹ Der vollkommene Maschinist, in Hoffmann's Fantasiestücke.

manufactures, there are two reflections which administer great occasion of surprise, — the one that all dignities and honors should be bestowed upon the exceeding few meagre inhabitants of the top of the mountain ; the other that our own province should have arrived to that greatness it now possesses without any regular system of laws. As to the first, it is with great pleasure that I have observed of late the gradual decay of delicacy and refinement among mankind, who are become too reasonable to require that we should labor with infinite pains to come up to the taste of these mountaineers, when they, without any, may condescend to ours. But as we now have an unquestionable majority on our side, I doubt not but we shall be shortly able to level these highlanders, and procure a further vent for our own product, which is already so much relished, encouraged, and rewarded by the nobility and gentry of Great Britain. . . . Furthermore, it were great cruelty if all such authors as cannot write in the other way were prohibited from writing at all. Against this I draw an argument from what seems to me an undoubted physical maxim, that poetry is a natural or morbid secretion of the brain. As I would not suddenly stop a cold in the head, or dry up my neighbor's issue, I would as little hinder him from necessary writing. It may be affirmed with great truth, that there is hardly any human creature past childhood, but at one time or other has had some poetical evacuation, and no doubt was much the better for it in his health. . . . I have known a man thoughtful, melancholy, and raving for divers days, who forthwith grew wonderfully easy, lightsome, and cheerful upon the discharge of the peccant humor, in exceeding purulent metre. . . . From hence it follows that a sup-

pression of the very worst poetry is of dangerous consequence to the state. . . . It is, therefore, manifest that mediocrity ought to be allowed, yea, indulged, to the good subjects of England."

Irony, as a mode of satire, describes a wide and rich province of letters, — a province embracing not a few of the choicest spirits, and some of the most genial compositions, of all time. Here shine the names of Lucian, Erasmus, Cervantes, Rabelais, Butler, Voltaire, Swift, Heine.

But literature has other ironies than that of satire. Writers of loftier aim and graver tone than those I have named have found their advantage in this fascinating element. Bishop Thirlwall, in a paper contributed to the "*Philological Museum*," discusses the irony he professes to find where certainly one would not suspect it, — in the tragedies of Sophocles. But the irony in that case is not a trait of the poet's mind, it inheres in the subject-matter of his fables; it is the irony of Fate in the fortunes of Ajax, of *Œdipus*, and *Philoctetes* which he depicts. The irony I have in view is purely subjective. But how shall I define, how discriminate from satire on the one hand, and superficial badinage on the other, — how identify, under forms so various, the subtle spirit which I seem to detect in writers who else have scarce anything in common? I select for examples two

poets as remote from each other in the bent of their genius as can well be found, — Milton and Goethe.

In Milton's prose, though largely satirical, the element of irony is not conspicuous. His poetry, which is not satirical, is steeped in it. It constitutes, I think, the peculiar charm of his verse. Take the "Hymn to the Nativity." The poet treats the Gentile divinities as actually existing personages; and that, not in the way of poetic machinery, as other Christian poets have sometimes done, but because the position he assumes in this poem is properly outside of all religions. He looks upon their conflict as Homer's gods behold the conflict of the Greeks and Trojans, not indeed with indifference, for he is celebrating the triumph of the Christian cause, yet not exactly as a Christian believer. His position is that of an outsider. He sings the victory, but not as personally concerned in it, except as his sympathy goes with the victor. The Gentile divinities are as real to him as the new-born God who puts them to flight; but they have had their day, they must yield to the incoming era of the new dispensation.

"Nor all the Gods beside
Longer dare abide;
Not Typhon huge, ending in snaky twine;
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew."

The irony here consists in the poet's aloofness from his theme, suggesting an *arrière-pensée*, and leaving a gap between it and the thought expressed, of which the reader must supply the missing link. In conversing with works of genius, we feel the difference between those in which the writer is sunk in his theme, and goes wholly out in it, and those in which he seems to stand apart from his own creations, as if toying with them and with us. The difference is no test of poetic merit; the creative power may be greater in the former case than in the latter. It is only a difference of intellectual reaction, a difference in the reach of conscious thought,—a fuller waking, albeit the waking of a genius less robust.

The charm of that something beyond, that circumfused *aura* of reserve which constitutes the essence of irony, I find in the greatest perfection in Goethe. Of all writers he impresses me most with the feeling of a double self. He is not, like most of his cotemporaries, subjective, but objective in his creations. His individuality is not put forward as in Byron, in Schiller, in Richter, even in Wordsworth, but studiously kept in the background. But the reader is made conscious of that background, of a thought in reserve, which is the real Goethe, behind the thought expressed, which

is also the real Goethe as well. Even in his Autobiography, where the topic is self, he contrives to get behind that self; now object, now subject, now both. The very title is a stroke of irony, — “Fiction and Truth.” In the opening chapter he gravely recounts the astrological aspects which auspicated his nativity; he gives us his horoscope as if it were an essential part of the history. Did Goethe, then, believe in astrology? No. Did he mean to satirize that belief? No. Is he jesting? Yes, and no. Is he in earnest? No, and yes. The reader may take it as he pleases. This is what another, reflecting on that birth, might find, astrologically expressed, in the fortunes awaiting the man-child who was dropped upon this earth-ball in Frankfort on the Main on the 28th of August, 1749.

In the “Conversations of German Emigrants” the “Old Man,” who had previously narrated two moral stories of the deepest practical significance, promises the company a tale that shall “remind them of nothing and of everything;” and thus introduces that wonderful composition which German critics have denominated “The Tale,” distinguishing it from everything else in that line. Here the ironical in Goethe’s genius reaches its climax. The thing remains to this day an unsolved problem, and in all likelihood will ever

remain so. Whether the author really meant anything more by it than to entertain the reader with a magic-lantern of incongruous images, and, if so, what that meaning is, are matters of conjecture. The sphinx is dumb, and gives no sign. Carlyle, who tried his teeth on it, calls it "one of the noblest performances produced for the last thousand years, wherein more meaning lies than in all the literature of our century." Novalis doubtless had Goethe in his mind when he wrote that "the genuine *Mährchen* is prophetic, an absolutely necessary presentation, and the author of such a one a seer of the future." It seems to be taken for granted by those who have studied it that in some way it figures the past and future of humanity;¹ but as to the import of separate parts, there is no agreement, and can be no certainty. It was meant that there should be none. Irony, throned on that monument, smiles an eternal smile in the face of Hermeneutic.

In the "Faust," where the subject-matter itself is the irony of life, the irony in the treatment is less apparent; scarcely at all in the first part, and only here and there, as in the visit to the "Mothers," in the second.

Goethe, like Milton in the "Nativity," assumes

¹ A recent writer, Baumgart, limits the interpretation to the future of Germany.

in some of his pieces a position external to religion ; but with this distinction, that Milton, though standing poetically aloof, pays reverent tribute to the Christian faith, whose fervent disciple he is, whilst Goethe's attitude is sometimes that of poetic indifference, and sometimes leans to heathen views.

In the lines addressed to his noble and devout friend, the Fräulein von Klettenberg, he makes use of the expression, referring to a picture of the Saviour in her room : " The God who suffered for you." He says in his Autobiography : —

" When in these stanzas, as sometimes on other occasions, I represented myself as an outsider, a stranger, or even a heathen, she did not object ; on the contrary, she assured me that she liked me better so than when I made use of Christian terminology, in the application of which, she said, I never succeeded. Indeed it was a common thing for me, when I read to her the missionary reports, which she always enjoyed hearing, to take the part of the Gentiles against the missionaries, and to venture to prefer their former estate. She remained ever friendly and gentle, and seemed to have no anxiety on my account, nor to be at all concerned about my salvation."

In the poem inscribed " To Coachman Kronos," in which he likens his ideal of life to a day's drive in a stage-coach, finding nothing in Christian imagery that suited his mood, he draws on pagan ideas to celebrate a glorious ending : —

“Drunk with the sun’s last ray, —
A sea of fire in my foaming eye, —
Whirl me, dazzled and reeling,
Into Hell’s nocturnal gate.

· · · · ·
Sound, O coachman, thy horn !
With clatter and echoing tramp
Let Orcus know we are coming,
That the host may be at the door
To give us friendly reception.”

In the piece entitled “Great is Diana of the Ephesians,” he takes part with the silversmith against the Apostle. He describes with artistic sympathy an aged goldsmith at work in his *atelier*, fashioning with pious care, as taught by his father, figures for the girdle of the loved goddess : —

“When all at once he hears so loud,
Like a rushing wind, in the street a crowd ;
And a talk there is of a God unseen —
Behind man’s foolish brow they ween —
More worthy far than the Being here
In whose breadth the Godhead we revere.
The master listens, nor listens long ;
His boys may run to see the throng ;
He files away, nor heeds the sound,
His goddess adorning with deer and hound,
And trusts that his fortune it may be
To represent her worthily.

· · · · ·
If any one think otherwise,
Let him do as seemeth good in his eyes ;
But to injure our craft if he presume,
A shameful end shall be his doom.”

In that most weird and tragic of all ballads, ancient or modern, “The Bride of Corinth,” where

and political *doctrinaires* ; appealed to on this hand and that for a verdict on things human and divine ; a disbeliever in violent revolutions, yet living in the midst of them ; charged with indifference to human weal because he chose to promote it by doing his own work in his own way, and refused to lend himself to any faction, — he found in irony his sure palladium against the assaults of those who could neither convince nor comprehend him. His “Coptic Song” is an indication of the method he sometimes saw fit to adopt : —

“COPTIC SONG.

“Leave to the learned their vain disputations,
 Strict and sedate let the pedagogues be ;
 Ever the wise of all ages and nations
 Nod to each other and smile and agree :
 Vain the attempt to cure fools of their folly,
 Children of wisdom abandon it wholly ;
 Fool them and rule them, for so it must be.

“Merlin the old in his tomb ever shining,
 Where as a youngling I heard him divining,
 Similar counsel confided to me :
 Vain the attempt to cure fools of their folly,
 Children of wisdom abandon it wholly ;
 Fool them and rule them, since fools they will be.

“Mountains frequented by Indian adorers,
 Crypts the resort of Egyptian explorers,
 All that is sacred confirms the decree :
 Vain the attempt to cure fools of their folly,
 Children of wisdom abandon it wholly ;
 Fool them and rule them, for so it should be.”

One sees how the irony so marked in Goethe as a writer had its root in an inborn or inbred irony of character; and this suggests a separate branch of our subject.

Irony in Character. — There are characters in history in whom this trait predominates to such an extent as to constitute them a class by themselves. Socrates, whose εἰρωνεία, so baffling to Thrasymachus and the Sophists, perhaps originated our use of the term; Diogenes, rolling his tub in mockery of the preparations for the Sicilian war; Augustus, choosing a sphinx for his seal; Julian the Apostate, Frederick the Second of the Hohenstauffen, Abelard, Leo the Tenth; among writers, Machiavelli, Erasmus, Gibbon, — are different types of this wide variety.

Such characters are apt to appear at the meeting-point of the old and the new, when faith in an old religion or institution or custom is on the decline, and numbers are arrayed against it, as in the beginning of the Christian era against polytheism, and in the sixteenth century against the Church of Rome. Such periods develop three distinct types of character in relation to old and new, — first, the destructive radical, who wishes to abolish the old, the sooner and more completely, the better; second, the believing and conscientious conservative, who clings to it with unswerving devotion; and third,

between these two a class of men, embracing often the best culture and largest thought of the time (of men, I say, not often of women,—they are usually affianced to one or the other side), who are not in full sympathy with either direction. They see bigotry, stupidity, antiquated error, on one side, and they also see vulgar adventure, prurency, and shallowness on the other. They fully apprehend whatever is true in the new ideas, and do them full justice in their private thought; but they also find meanings in the old which those who renounce it do not perceive, and which give it a right to be. At the same time they feel that the forms which embody those meanings are outgrown, that much in the old is obsolete and will not ally itself with a vigorous future. They are nominally in it, but cannot heartily embrace it. As little can they lend themselves to the turbulent and vulgar new. They fancy they see all there is in both interests, and a good deal more besides. Now, whether it is native irony of character that dictates this position, or whether the position develops the irony, it is here that irony is most at home. An ironical treatment of the claims of both parties is the natural resource of one who feels himself raised above either, and is equally indifferent to both. The author of the essay on the “Irony of Sophocles,” already referred to, remarks: “There

is always a slight cast of irony in the grave, calm, respectful attention impartially bestowed by an intelligent judge on two contending parties who are pleading their causes before him with all the earnestness of deep conviction and excited feeling." He sees "that the right and the truth lie on neither side exclusively ; . . . both have plausible claims and specious reasons to allege, though each is too much blinded by prejudice and passion to do justice to the views of his adversary." This is the position I have in view. The ironist speaks sometimes in the spirit of one party, and sometimes of the other, but always with that mental reserve, that *arrière-pensée* in which the essence of irony consists. From which it appears that irony of character is the negative and polar antithesis of moral enthusiasm. All the advantages are wanting to it which moral enthusiasm gives. The ironist is not an eloquent man. Eloquence supposes earnest advocacy ; but earnest advocacy is denied to him. He is not advocate, but judge. That man will never powerfully sway the popular mind who sees both sides. On the other hand, the earnest advocate can never move him, the ironist. There is no intellectual *rapprochement* between him and the popular speaker, in whom is no reserve. He comes to despise eloquence, seeing behind the fervid outpouring nothing more than the sentiment of the

hour, and noting how the cup is emptied with the speech.

From want of moral enthusiasm it would not be always safe to infer want of faith in humanity, or want of interest in human weal. The ironist may believe that natural growth, not violent change, is the way to accomplish that end, and that every attempt to anticipate the natural course of events retards the growth of good. You may carry your pet measure; but what if you lose more than you gain by it? Abolish one evil, and you start another. Luther, when he saw what a wide door of abuse the Reformation had opened, said, with a sigh, that attempting to reform mankind was like trying to seat a drunken man on horseback: you help him on one side, and he tumbles on the other. Moreover, the ironist may think that human destiny follows a prescribed course, which all our fussing, our conventions and legislation, cannot further or change, but only perhaps embarrass and delay. By shaking the tree you do not ripen the fruit, but may cause it to fall untimely to the ground. Goethe thought that Luther had put back for centuries the cause of human progress. The error here lies in not perceiving that these very agitations are a part of the prescribed course; that Luther and Protestantism were not a wilful interpolation, but a necessary product of the time; that

whatever was put back by it was put back divinely ; that you cannot break the continuity of history, being yourself but one of the links.

The ironies thus far discussed are intellectual and moral traits ; their common element is reserve, or the thought behind. By a subtle association, not easily defined, the term is applied to phases of life in which this element does not appear, and where the irony is not in the thought, but in the fact.

Irony in Religion. — The history of religion exhibits ironies whose point consists in a glaring contradiction of theory and practice, or a conflict of faith and will. When the Emperor Frederick the Second visited Jerusalem, after a treaty with the Sultan Kameel, which gave that city, under certain conditions, to the Christians, the Emir Schems-Eddin was charged to see that no offence was given to the Christian sovereign by the Moslem in the practice of their religion. It chanced that the muezzin, who called the faithful to prayer, was, during that visit, to have read, as the lesson for the day, a verse of the Koran which denied the divinity of Christ. To meet the difficulty the Emir suppressed the ceremony altogether. The Emperor, who cared little for the dogma, was more disappointed at missing an

observance he was curious to witness, than gratified with the compliment paid to his religion,—which compliment, however, he returned by sharply rebuking a Christian soldier who had just entered the mosque of Omar with a copy of the Gospels. And thus the two religions, in theory bound to urge their own doctrine, denied it in the persons of their chief representatives, bandying compliments with reciprocal disclaimers, and exemplifying what may be called the irony of faith.

Ancient polytheism sometimes betrayed its hollowness by ludicrous revulsions of distrust or ill will.

The Emperor Augustus had lost two fleets in two successive naval engagements. To signalize his displeasure with the god of the sea, he forbade the image of Neptune to be borne with those of other gods in the next triumphal procession.

Suetonius relates that when the people of Rome heard of the death of their favorite, Germanicus, they rushed into the temples and punished the gods with stoning. This putting of your god on his good behavior, treating him according to the good or evil fortune experienced by the worshipper, is a part of that profound insincerity, or rather of that latent fetichism, which characterizes the vulgar religion under all dispensations. The principle of fetichism is the practice of religion as a charm to secure good fortune.

Plutarch reports of the infamous Sulla, that, being in imminent danger of defeat in a battle before the gates of Rome, he took from his bosom a little golden image of Pythian Apollo, and, kissing it, said: "O Pythian Apollo, who hast given Cornelius Sulla the victory in so many engagements, hast thou at last brought him to the gates of Rome, there to perish ignominiously with his fellow-citizens?" The petulance of this heathen prayer is paralleled by many a Christian remonstrance, addressed to the Christian's God, in like emergencies. Robert the Monk, the chronicler of the First Crusade, relates that Guy, the brother of Bohemond, in the terrible disaster which befell the army of Godfrey at Antioch, cried: "Almighty God, where is your virtue? If you are omnipotent, why do you permit these things? Who will ever be a soldier of yours, or a pilgrim again?"

The irony which mixes belief with unbelief, calculation with devotion in religion, seems to have reached its perfection in Louis the Eleventh of France, whose devout intercourse with his favorite saints, or rather with their images stuck in his hat, Sir Walter Scott has so effectively portrayed.

Another sort of religious irony is the well-known travesty indulged by the Church of the Middle Age of her own most solemn rites. This enormity prevailed in various forms, in all of which mocking

of religion was the leading idea. There was the Feast of Asses, in which an ass covered with sacerdotal robes was led into the church, and a mass performed before him, with burlesque ceremonies and hideous music. There was the Glutton Mass, when the people went to church to cram themselves with meat and drink. Another variety of sacrilegious pastime was the election and installation of the "Pope of Fools," or "Lord of Misrule." On these occasions the rioters would disguise themselves in grotesque costumes, turn the church into a hunting-ground, play at dice upon the altars, and commit every conceivable extravagance. The clergy, it would seem, not only tolerated, but encouraged, these fooleries. In fact, it was the irony of the Church herself, the Nemesis of faith, religion resenting its own sanctities.

The Irony of Fate. — In a different, and not altogether legitimate, sense, the word "irony" is used to characterize certain disasters and tragedies of life. We speak of the irony of fate. The phrase is applied to events which have a retributory character, and in which the retribution, from its fitness and unexpected congruity, looks like design ; events in which, independently of any relation of cause and effect, a conscious Nemesis appears to have adjusted the occurrence to the person concerned. Saul, in Hebrew history, having driven out the

witches from Israel, is constrained at last to consult one himself, and from her conjuration learns his doom; Julius Cæsar, having conquered Pompey at Pharsalus, falls at the base of Pompey's statue; Dion, who

“Overleaped the eternal bars,
And following guides whose craft holds no consent
With aught that breathes the ethereal element,”

caused the assassination of Heraclides, perishes by the hands of assassins; Boniface the Eighth meets his fate through the instrumentality of Sciarra Colonna, whose house he had spoiled; Robespierre ends his career with the guillotine, to which he had sent so many of his fellow-citizens; Napoleon the First, who tried so hard to shut up England in her own island, is shut up by England in an island himself; South Carolina, to make slavery sure, breaks with the Union, and by that means loses her slaves.

The retribution in these cases takes the form of moral compensation; but there are turns and contradictions in human destiny, not to be classed as moral retributions, which equally illustrate the irony of fate. In a certain town in Massachusetts, founded by Puritans who fled from prelacy, the burial-ground which contains their bones now affords a convenient pathway to a flourishing Catholic church.

The Irony of Nature. — We began with the irony of spirit; let us round the swift synopsis with a glance at the ironies of Nature.

As such I reckon, for one thing, the close reserve with which Nature baffles the scrutiny of science, and hides from curious eyes the final secret of her births. From time immemorial the inscrutable mother has been playing a game of inverted blind-man's-buff with her inquisitive children. She bandages their eyes, and bids them catch her if they can. Her explorers chase her hither and thither, but their eyes are holden that they should not know her. When any one thinks he has caught her, it is only a part of her drapery which she yields to his clutches, never herself. "Science," says the Persian mystic, "puts her finger in her mouth, and cries because the mystery of being will not reveal itself." The physiologist searches for the secret of life. What is it that discriminates animated from inanimate being? Function. In the lowest as in the highest, in the rhizopod as in the angel, it is function that distinguishes life from death. But where is the functionary? Where sits the performer who plays the many-stringed or the one-stringed instrument? No dissection could ever show. What becomes of him when the instrument stops? No observation could ever report. Performer and performance are indistin-

guishably one. Between the instrument played and the instrument suddenly stopped there is no perceptible difference, except the fact of ability or inability still to perform. Yet is the difference infinite between life and death. The ontologist searches for the primal substance. Behind all the wrappers that envelop it, beneath all the acts that represent it, he would stand face to face with the ultimate fact. Is it matter? — with microscope and knife and crucible he interrogates sensible forms; is it spirit? — with unsparing analysis he interrogates consciousness: and finds himself at last, in whatever direction he seeks, after all his probing, face to face with — nothing. And “nothing” is the answer with which the irony of Nature responds alike to physicist and metaphysician when the search transcends the prescribed bound. The Ixion of Greek mythology is an ever-fit symbol of all endeavors to lay hold of the absolute. Ixion is in love with Juno, the queen of the empyrean; he thinks to embrace her, and embraces a cloud. Transcendentalism experiences the same illusion, and experiences something of Ixion’s penalty of endless rotation, forever traversing the same cycle, from spirit to matter, and round to spirit again, on the wheel to which her serpentine subtleties have bound her.

“Tortos Ixionis angues
Immanemque rotam.”

Philosophy chases ; Nature hides, forever inviting, forever baffling, investigation. "Nature," wrote Goethe, in the midst of his researches, "we are surrounded and clasped by her, unable to step out of her, and unable to go farther into her. Unbidden and unwarned, she takes us up into her circling dance, and whirls herself forth with us until we are exhausted and sink from her arms. . . . We live in the midst of her, and are strangers to her ; she converses with us unceasingly, and never betrays her secret. We act upon her continually, and yet have no power over her. She lives altogether in her children ; and the mother, where is she ?"

A deeper irony lurks in the swift termination with which Nature limits all beauty, satisfaction, life.

All beauty resides in surfaces merely ; it is constituted by lines and angles, of which the least disturbance dissipates the vision. All natural beauty is a phantasmagory, an unreal mockery, to which a sentiment in the soul of the beholder gives all its effect. The glories of sunset, the witchery of rose and gold that lures like the gates of heaven,—what is it but vibrations of an invisible ether struggling through moisture and made visible by impediment ? Obstruction in the object, abstraction in the subject, explains the whole

secret of the gorgeous cheat. The moon-silvered expanse of ocean seen from your balcony at Newport or Nahant, — a vision that draws the soul from the body and laps it in elysium, — what is it but a remnant of that setting sun received second-hand and mixed with unsavory brine?

The moon on the wave is beautiful, and beautiful the landscape bathed in its light. But encounter that orb at dead of night on a desolate road, when past the full, just risen above the horizon and level with your eye, gibbous, lurid, portentous, — what irony glares in it! what a tale it tells of a blasted, worn-out, ruined world!

All human beauty is but skin deep, and scarcely that. A little roughening of the cuticle will mar the fairest face and change beauty to hideousness. What fearful irony leers upon us from the human skull! This was the head, this the divine countenance, of some Helen, some Aspasia or Cleopatra, some Agnes of Meran or Mary of Scotland, on whose eyelids hung the destinies of nations, for whose lips the lords of the earth thought the world well lost, from whose lineaments painters drew their presentment of the Queen of Heaven. How was this cruel metamorphosis wrought? Simply by stripping off the surface. The miraculous bulb was peeled, a layer of tissue removed, and behold the grinning horror! “Get you to my

lady's chamber; tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come."

The saying of the poet, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," is true only when predicated of the image in the mind and of intellectual contemplation. The beauty of *things* is a phantom, the enjoyment the senses have of it a slippery illusion. A beautiful phenomenon is actually seen but for a moment. A little while, and, though present to the eye, it is seen no more, as a strain of music ceases to be heard when unduly prolonged. Only the thought survives the image in the mind. As mere sensation, the enjoyment of beauty is fleeting, like all our enjoyments, — the more intense, the more evanescent. It is a bitter irony of Nature that, while grief may last for days and months, all pleasure is momentary. The best that life yields in that kind is an equilibrium of mild content, a poise between joy and pain. Disturb that equilibrium by dropping a sorrow into the scale, and long time is required to restore the balance. Disturb the equilibrium by adding a new joy, and how soon the beam is straight! We get used and indifferent to our joys; we do not get used to our pains. And yet Nature can bear a greater accession of sorrow than of pleasure. Strange to say, the heart will sooner break with joy than grief. On the plane of physical experience there are painful sensations

which beyond a certain point of aggravation are fatal, as the strain of the rack has sometimes proved ; and there are pleasurable sensations which would be fatal if greatly intensified or prolonged. But note this curious fact, that before the limit of endurance in the latter case is reached, the pleasure turns to pain,—which shows how limited is physical enjoyment. Bodily pain, on the contrary, never breaks into any falsetto of pleasure, but keeps “due on” its dolorous road, till anguish deepens into death.

Of mental emotions, joy in itself is more fatal than sorrow ; the only reason why men oftener pine to death than rejoice to death, is because occasions of extreme grief are more frequent than occasions of excessive joy.

“If ever,” says Faust in his bargain with Mephistopheles, — “if ever I shall say to the passing moment, ‘Tarry, thou art so beautiful,’ then you may lay fetters on me, and I will gladly go to perdition.”

“Le bonheur,” says Voltaire, “n’est qu’un rêve, et la douleur est réelle ; il y a quatre-vingts ans que je l’éprouve.”

Meanwhile Nature pursues her course, regardless alike of joy and grief. No sympathy has she with sad or gay, no care to adjust her aspects with our experience, her seasons with our need, or to

match with her sky the weather in the soul. She smiles her blandest on the recent battle-field, where the hopes of a thousand homes lie withered ; and she smites with her tornadoes the ungathered harvest in which the bread of a thousand homes has ripened. She refuses a glint of her sunlight to the ship befogged on a lee shore, and pours it in full splendor on the finished, irreparable wreck. Prodigal of life, she is every moment teeming with births innumerable ; and still the drift of death accumulates on the planet. This earth of our abode is all compact of extinct creations, every creature on it a sarcophagus of perished lives, every existence purchased and maintained by sunless deaths. The outstretched landscape refulgent in the bright June morning, dew-gemmed, vocal with the ecstasies of welcoming birds, suggestive of eternal youth, is a funeral pageant, a part of the fatal procession which takes us with it as we gaze. The fresh enamel laid on by the laughing Hours, the festive sheen, the universal face of joy, "the bridal of the earth and sky," when analyzed turns to a thin varnish spread over mould and corruption. And amid the myriad-voiced psalm of life that makes the outgoings of the morning glad, is heard, if we listen, the sullen ground-tone of mortality with which Nature accompanies all her music.

Out of all these glooms into which we have strayed, and out of the ironies of Nature and life, there is no escape by the avenues of thought, but only by turning from thought to deed. The social and moral activities for those who live in them neutralize or else compensate these intellectual sorrows, and keep the importunities of Momus in check. It belongs to the moral sentiment, or rather it belongs to the morally regenerate will, to create for itself a world into which no irony can enter but the blessed irony of God, the reserve which is not limitation and negation and death, but yea behind yea, and life upon life. Love is the anointing of the eyes which transfigures Erebus itself into yea, or makes it invisible. Every really good deed, every genuine act of self-sacrifice, is immortal, a birth from the heart of the Divine; the everlasting morning is in it, the gates of hell are powerless, and Mephistopheles leers in vain.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF FETICHISM.

[From the Unitarian Review, March, 1881.]

EMERSON in one of his poems complains that —

“Things are in the saddle,
And ride mankind.”

The saying is true in other senses than that of the exigence of material interests, which is what the poet intended by it.

Mankind, the world over, in divers ways are ridden by “things,” possessed by them, enthralled by them. Nor is it always a preponderant materialism that imposes this thrall. Materialism is not the normal faith of human kind, but an aberration. There are philosophers who ignore the agency of spirit in phenomenal nature, and there are worldlings who rest in sensual satisfactions, or satisfactions derived from material values; but naturally man is more spiritualist than materialist, and there is an interest in things, and an action of things on the mind, which attests the supremacy of spirit in human life. Every thing was first a thought, and only thinking makes things.

The savage, groping after Deity, makes a god of

some object which tradition or his own fancy has consecrated,—a block, an elephant's tooth, a misshapen stone, a tree struck by lightning,—things which possess no virtue or value but what they derive from his thought. These are instances of that creature-worship which constitutes a stage of religion in the savage mind. Is the savage then a materialist? Are these homages proof of that utter want of a spiritual sense which vulgar opinion ascribes to him? On the contrary, they attest an overruling spiritualism, which refuses to see in what we call matter mere inert substance, or in brutes mere animated dust, but feels itself, even there, confronted by a conscious and an awful Presence. The savage feels his littleness and helplessness in view of the great outside,—the Not-me, which everywhere surrounds him. Awed by the overweight of visible Nature, he divines the presence of an invisible Power. In his attempt to lay hold of this Power, he fails to disengage it from the visible All which embodies it. He seems to himself to catch its aspect, here and there, in some object which strikes him as possessing peculiar significance, which individualizes, so to speak, the all-present mystery, and thrusts it on his fancy or his fear.

This is religion in—I will not say its earliest, for that is a disputed point—but religion in its

crudest state. Yet how near to the pantheism of some of the most cultured and profoundest minds! We call it Fetichism,—a term introduced by De Brosses, who coined it from the Portuguese *fetisso*, an amulet, or charm. The *fetisso* is not necessarily a god; but the tribes most addicted to the use of these things are those with whom creature-worship chiefly prevails.

Fetichism is the worship of things, of brute creatures, animate or inanimate,—worship of them, not for their material value, or any use which they serve, but for the demon's sake supposed to reside in them. All this is so foreign to our conception of Godhead, so abhorrent from all our traditions, as to seem almost a wilful aberration. Theologians, possessed with the notion of man's declension from primitive reason, find here a confirmation of that hypothesis. Accordingly, fetichism has become a term of reproach. It stands in the popular apprehension for something monstrous and utterly vile, as contrasted with the uses of revealed religion. But these are not the test by which it should be judged. Let it rather be compared with the stark irreligion, the crass sensualism of either savage or civilized man. I wish to place it in a more favorable light, to emphasize its better side.

Fetichism is not materialism. It is one of the first proofs of a spirit in man akin to the divine,

that he can thus invest inferior, and even inanimate, creatures with the attributes of Deity. That man, himself the image of Godhead, can see divinity in stocks and stones, can adore the superhuman in a crocodile or the stump of a tree, attests the vitality of the God-seeking instinct, which, for want of direction, in the absence of the true light, is driven to make a god of such objects as these, laying hold of whatever by accident of mood or association has hit its dim presentiment with a fancied air of supernaturalness.

In a more advanced stage of humanity fetichism sometimes assumes a different character. Where it does not rise into symbolism, it may sink into sensualism, mechanical converse with idols, like the *teraphim* which Rachel abstracted from her father Laban, or like the gods which Birmingham is said to manufacture for the use of the Hindoos.

But the fetichist proper, the creature-worshipping savage, is no sensualist, is no materialist. He sees spirit everywhere. The whole external world to him is magical, demoniacal. Every senseless object is informed with life. He has not yet learned to distinguish between person and thing. All is person that happens to attract his special regard.

I find here proof of an inborn spiritualism, or call it idealism, or immaterialism, which shows itself wherever human nature is found in its aboriginal

simplicity. The savage is reproduced in every child. The child beats the inanimate object that gave him pain. Theoretically, he knows that the hurt was not willed by the thing that hurt; but passion outruns thought, and, acting on an earlier, hylozoic conception, endows the senseless offender with sense and purpose. Scarcely the mature man represses resentment at the misbehavior, seemingly wilful, of the matter he deals with, when wood or metal baffles his shaping hand. He would not seriously tax the elements with unkindness, but the sudden gust which plucks his hat from his head, or turns his umbrella inside out, afflicts him with almost a sense of personal malice; so instinctively do men associate will with motion, and person with will. Language itself bears witness of this tendency in such phrases as "the freaks of the lightning," "the wind bloweth where it listeth," and in our personification of sun, and moon, and ships.

Caspar Hauser, the Bavarian youth, who, reared in solitude and darkness, with no instruction until his eighteenth year, was then thrust upon the world, physically full-grown, but intellectually an infant, is a perfect example of this simplicity of the natural man, which knows no Cartesian dualism in nature, but sees volition and spirit in all things. "He believed," says Feuerbach, "every

motion which he witnessed in any object to be spontaneous. If a sheet of paper was blown by the wind, he thought it had run away from the table by an impulse of its own. He believed that the tree of its own will moved its leaves and its branches. The tree to him was a sensitive being; and the boy who struck its trunk with a stick provoked his anger for giving it pain. He conceived that the balls of a bowling-alley ran voluntarily along the boards, and that, when they stopped, it was because they were tired." It was deemed expedient to treat this young man at first as a child. Some toy horses were given him to play with. He could not believe that they were not living creatures. He held his bread to them; and when his keeper tried to make him understand that they could not eat, he pointed to the crumbs which stuck in their mouths as proof that they did. One of the horses had no bridle. He made a bridle for it, and spent two days in trying to persuade it to open its mouth to receive the bit. "From this and other circumstances," says his biographer, "it appeared that in his infantile soul ideas of animate and inanimate, organic and inorganic, natural and artificial, were entirely confused."

The intellectual condition of the savage resembles that of Caspar Hauser, as described in Feuerbach's sketch. He sees volition, conscious life,

personality, — what wonder if Deity also ! — in inanimate things.

Advancing humanity soon outgrows this illusion. Yet watch a little girl at play with her doll, and see in the nursery, in the bosom of civilization, an example of that deep instinct of personification which passionate contemplation of an object, with suspended reason, elicits, and which forms the fundamental principle of fetichism.

It needs for this end no elaborate carving or painting, no porcelain puppet from the toy-shop. Take a roll of cloth, arrange it into a rude similitude of the human figure, make at one end with a stroke of the pen two circles with central dots for the eyes, an angle for the nose, a straight line for the mouth, — a rag baby, — and give it to the child. Straightway she endows it with life ; she passionately caresses it, converses with it, credits it with consciousness and moral idiosyncrasies, comforts it under imaginary sorrows, rewards its good behavior, punishes its faults, and is inconsolable when the iconoclast brother, in a spirit of mischief, lays violent hands on her pet.

Beyond the walls of the nursery, and past the illusions of childhood, there are moods of the adult mind when inanimate forms exert a magical influence. Proteus, Glaucus, Arcadian Pan, in Greek mythology, owed their origin, I guess, to visions

by the sea-shore and in the solitudes of the forest, in which rocks and surf and gnarled trees seemed to simulate the human form. Wordsworth, in his "Peter Bell," has depicted with psychological fidelity the fascination exercised by external objects on a rude and depraved nature : —

"The moon uneasy looked, and dimmer ;
The broad blue heavens appeared to glimmer,
And the rocks *staggered* all around."

There is a kind of feticism — another form of the empire of things — which, without personifying inanimate objects, gives them a factitious value, irrespective of external grace or any intrinsic worth, — a value derived from personal or historic association.

You have a cane, a walking-stick of quite ordinary aspect. Apart from its history it has no market value. But suppose it once belonged to the poet just named, was cut by Wordsworth's own hand from the banks of Yarrow, accompanied him in his rambles through Westmoreland and Cumberland, supported his steps in climbing Skiddaw and in pacing the shores of Derwent-water and Winandermere, — would you exchange it for the smartest stick from the shop ? Ordinarily, things are valued for the gratification they afford, or may be the means of affording, to the senses. But here is a class of values in which the

senses have no share, giving proof of a radical idealism in human nature which it is comforting to think of.

Mr. Horace Furness, the learned Shakspearian, has a pair of gloves, nowise remarkable for beauty of workmanship or convenience of wear, — plain buff-leather gauntlets, — which he permits to be seen only through a glass case, protecting them from the touch of profane hands. We respect the jealous care bestowed on these garments when we learn that they once belonged to Shakspeare. Garrick so received them; and from Garrick down the tradition is sure.

We need to distinguish between fetichism and symbolism. Both are homage paid to things; but in the one case it is the thing itself, for its own sake; in the other it is the thing in its representative capacity, as sign of something else. In fetichism it is the individual, in symbolism it is the species, that counts. In fetichism the identical object admits of no substitute; in symbolism, so the form be preserved, the individual object is of no importance. The Romanist bows to the cross without asking what its material or whence it came. The form is all that he considers; any other cross would do as well. But if this particular cross has belonged to some saint, or has a history which consecrates it beyond the common,

then it is not only symbol, but fetich. To the patriotic mind the national flag is sacred, not for the rag's sake, but for what it represents; and patriotism is not offended if, when this particular flag is past service, it is burned and another hoisted in its place. But if this individual flag is associated with some hard-fought field or some famous and beloved captain, then, however tattered and torn, it is zealously preserved, and becomes a national fetich forevermore.

A familiar fetichism is the passion for autographs of distinguished men. We are brought near to the heroes of our homage by the contemplation of their self-written characters. They hold us in mortmain by a tenure which strengthens with age. Near a thousand dollars have been paid for an autograph of Shakspeare. A handy clerk will trace you the sixteen or seventeen letters precisely in the style of the master; nay, they may be photographed with such exactness that no microscope can detect the difference between the copy and the original: but the writing has comparatively no value. Fetichism insists on the actual thing, as if some mysterious effluence from the writer's hand had passed into it and charged it with talismanic power.

Saint Paul is supposed to have been an indifferent chirographer, employing a scribe in most of his

letters to the churches. But that to the Galatians was written with his own hand, and in it he seems to refer to his ungainly manuscript: ἴδετε πηλίκους γράμμασιν ἔγραψα. Suppose we had that identical Epistle, preserved by some wondrous chance, and now first brought to light and offered for sale! One can imagine the competition which such an offer would provoke among the libraries of Christendom. One can hardly imagine the sum which the British Museum would be willing to pay for such a prize.

Collections of *virtuosi* in all kinds foster a fetichism proper to themselves. The poorest picture which Titian's own hands could be proved to have painted, the merest daub of his yet unpractised brush, so its genuineness could be authenticated beyond question, would fetch more in the market than a perfect copy of his greatest work, or perhaps than any masterpiece of contemporary art. An acquaintance of mine, whom fortune had blessed with more wealth than judgment, showed me, in a gallery containing some excellent paintings, a few on which he set especial value, and for which, as purporting to be the works of old masters, he had paid exorbitant prices. Not one of them intrinsically was worth the frame in which it hung. Such glamour ugliness takes from a name. I thought of the *παθήματα*, the passion-pictures,

of early Christendom, which escaped the reforming hand of the Isaurian, while my friend recounted to me the evidence of their genuineness, — the old story of impoverished nobles forced to part with their ancestral treasures.

The fetichism of devotion has been a power in history. It saved Rome at the lowest ebb of her fortunes from utter extinction. “Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage,” says Gibbon, “the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honor and dominion. A vague tradition was embraced that two Jewish teachers — a tent-maker and a fisherman — had formerly been executed in the circus of Nero; and at the end of five hundred years their genuine or fictitious relics were adored as the palladium of Christian Rome.” Whatever may be thought of the style and spirit of this passage, so characteristic of the great historian, it is certain that the life, the continued existence, of Rome in her decline depended on the strong attraction of the sacred relics, which drew Christian pilgrims from all parts of the world to the citadel of their faith. The bones of the martyrs could work their miracles only on the spot; but a vigorous traffic was carried on in iron filings from the chains with which it was claimed that Paul and Peter had been

bound. Pope Gregory I. subsidized the lucrative trade by his official declaration that these fragments of iron possessed healing virtues equal to those of the bones of the martyrs; which Gibbon thinks quite probable. Some of the principal cities of antiquity were protected by the faith of their citizens in some fetich which constituted their paladium. It was the quest of a fetich, the "Holy Grail," which inspired the most romantic adventures of chivalry. It was the exhibition of a fetich, the sacred lance, that delivered the Christian host imprisoned within the walls of Antioch.

It used to be said that there were in Europe pretended pieces of the true cross enough to build a seventy-four. Suppose one actually possessed a fragment of the wood on which Jesus hung, — assured, if such a thing were possible, by incontrovertible evidence, — what virtue would there be in that block above any other piece of timber of the same dimensions and fibre? And yet what price would be deemed by Christian zeal too great for such a relic? A very respectable kind of fetichism is that, — more respectable, I think, than the utilitarianism which acknowledges no value in things beyond their material capabilities.

Scarcely a household but has its fetich, — some piece of ancestral furniture, a chair, a dish, a trinket, — some heirloom whose value is not in

itself, but in the story that goes with it. The bereaved mother preserves in some secret receptacle a lock of the hair of the child that died in infancy. The sight of it "wounds" her

"With a grief
Whose balsam never grew ;"

but she has treasured it none the less through all these years, and still treasures it with that pious fetichism of the heart which defies philosophy, and which it is better to know no philosophy than to be without.

In religion fetichism marks the lowest grade of spiritual life. It was a great and decisive step in human progress when visible gods were exchanged for invisible, when Powers took the place of Things, and the hymns of the Rig-Veda lifted the soul from the veneration of natural objects to the adoration of Nature herself as manifest in her elemental forces, — water, wind, and fire. Of this worship a reminiscence survives in our personification of Nature as a female divinity, — a bit of heathenism which Christian theism is fain to tolerate.

But fetichism itself, as I have endeavored to show, is not that brutal arrest in mere sensualism which theological prejudice is wont to figure it. In fetichism itself there is a kindling of the spirit. If "the heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone," it is because he has the God-idea

in his mind, and surmises Deity in wood and stone. I have more sympathy with him than with the scientist who can find no Deity anywhere, but only molecules and blind force. All fetichism is interesting; for in all fetichism there is precisely that refusal to rest in the visible object, that faculty of seeing something more in it than the senses cognize, which differences the spiritual man from the sensual. It is not the block as such that makes the fetich, but the block *plus* the unknown behind it. There are those to whom the things they converse with are final. A rose is a rose, a brook is a brook. There are others for whom these things are informed with ideal import. There are those to whom sunrise and sunset, with their crimson draperies, are material phenomena, whose significance is quite exhausted when science has explained their cause. There are others to whom sunrise and sunset are the greetings and farewells of a coming and departing God. There are those who see in amethyst and emerald bits of quartz or silix stained with chromium or peroxide of iron, worth so much a carat as they come from the hands of the lapidary. There are others to whom these gems are hints and foregleams of the New Jerusalem.

The secret of fetichism is that, as Mr. Longfellow naively says, "things are not what they seem." In

all fetichism there is idealism, in all there is piety ; not indeed of the highest type, but still piety that deserves our respect. " Things are in the saddle." Some of them have a right to their saddle by virtue of the faith which placed them there, and the strong prescription of the ages gone that have kept them there. Venerable to me are the great world-fetiches which for centuries have ridden, and still ride, so large a portion of mankind. Venerable is the Kaaba with its stone, the oldest visible object of worship, in which Islam adores the heirloom of an elder faith. Venerable is the house of the Virgin, which angels transported from Nazareth and delivered at Loretto. Venerable are the lip-worn bronzes of Rome. Venerable are the sacred bones of the Three Kings which have wandered so far, and find rest at last in the city of Cologne. What care I that historically these things are not what their votaries claim ? They have a history of their own, which is quite authentic and commands my homage. Where devotion has knelt for ages I do not care to criticise. Criticism has its rights ; but if criticism had full sway, the world would be shorn of half its sanctities. If criticism had full sway, no epic would ever have been sung, no gospel written, and no religion have established itself on the earth.

It should move our admiration to see what awfulness faith can impart to dead matter, or what the

senses esteem as such. In the view of the higher philosophy there is no dead matter, but only forces *in equilibrio*, — temporary arrest of motion. The penetrating eye of Leibniz saw something in bodies which Descartes, who separated matter and spirit, could not see, — something beside extension and even prior to extension. Ever memorable saying, — “*Imo extensione prius*”! Fetichism sees in bodies and gives to bodies an added something which no ontology can state and no analysis detect, — something impalpable, imponderable, inseparable, untransferable, — something whose value increases with the lapse of time, — something by virtue of which they are precious as rubies, and without which they are vile as the ground we tread on.

GENIUS.

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THE finest spirits of all time concur in ascribing their best effects to a higher power. The genial flow of successful production registers itself in our consciousness, as a special grace beyond the command of the private will. The experience of every true artist, of every great poet, prophet, discoverer, of every providential leader of his time, attests the action of an alien force transcending the calculated efforts of the mind, and working the surprises of art and life.

This latent and reserved power in man the Greeks called *Δαίμων* (dæmon). Plutarch, in his gossiping discourse on the dæmon of Socrates, reports the vision of one Timarchus, who descended into the cave of Trophonius to consult the oracle on the subject. He there saw spirits which were partly immersed in human bodies and partly exterior to them, shining luminously above their heads. He was told that the part immersed in the body is called the soul, but the external part is called dæmon. Every man, says the oracle, has

his dæmon, whom he is bound to obey; those who implicitly follow that guidance are the prophetic souls, the favorites of the gods. Goethe, in his oracular way, speaks of the dæmonic in man as a power lying back of the will, and inspiring certain natures with miraculous energy. He disclaims this power for himself, yet in his Autobiography represents the poetic faculty dwelling in him as something beyond his control,—as a kind of obsession.

It is this involuntary, incalculable force that constitutes what we call *genius*. The word was originally synonymous with the *Δαίμων* of the Greeks. It denoted a guardian power beyond the consciousness and above the will of the individual,—a power which determined and controlled his action, but over which he had no control. It is comparatively a recent use to speak of genius as a quality of mind; a power possessed by, instead of a power possessing. We still make use of the phrase “good genius” in the sense of guardian spirit.

Genius is the higher self, and common to all men. What, then, distinguishes men of genius, so called, from the rest of mankind? We may suppose that the higher self is more active in some than in others, or that it finds more docile subjects. Or we may suppose that its quality differs with different individuals. I only contend that genius is not a special faculty which he who has

it employs at will, as the painter his brush or the sculptor his chisel, but the higher nature, the man of the man.

It is not, however, of genius as a psychological principle, but of genius as an intellectual phenomenon, — of genius as manifested in science, art, life, — that I wish to speak.

So viewed, its great and distinguishing characteristic is originality. In the etymology of the word lies the sense of productive force, and in vulgar opinion it stands for originating power. In science it appears as discovery and invention, always as newness. It is the mediator between the known and the unknown, the possible and impossible. In science, as in nature, there is always a leap from stage to stage. The beginning of the animal is not the organic sequent of the vegetable kingdom, nor the viviparous animal of the oviparous, nor man of the chimpanzee. At each stage there is a lift between successive orders, a break in the sequence where plastic Nature interpolates a new thought; and the *præsens numen* makes the bridge from kind to kind. The history of intellectual genesis exhibits similar interpolations. The succession between old and new, in science and art, is not a mechanical sequence, but a lift and a leap. The transition from stage to stage is not the measured increment of an arithmetical series,

but a mediation of originating genius. Genius is the bridge-builder, the *pontifex maximus*, in the passage from period to period in science and art.

Such a bridge was built by Kepler for the science of astronomy, which, after the pregnant conjecture of Copernicus, had come to a stand in the sixteenth century. Tycho Brahe had accumulated at his observatory a mass of facts which he wanted the wit to apply to further progress, still maintaining, in spite of Copernicus, the earth's immobility. Kepler saw these facts; and in his productive imagination they immediately germinated into new discoveries. A discrepancy of eight minutes between the position of Mars as noted by Brahe and that which it should have had as calculated by the Copernican hypothesis, suggested to him the ellipse as the true orbit of planetary motion. With this discovery, to which he added that of the equal areas in equal times of the *radius vector*, and the true proportion of the times of revolution to the distances of the planets from the sun, he inaugurated the new era in astronomy. Kepler's "Three Laws" are the three arches of the bridge by which the sublimest of the sciences crossed the gulf from the Ptolemaic to the modern system.

In later time, when Laplace by victorious arithmetic had solved the portentous problems of the *Mécanique Céleste*, and reduced to order the seem-

ing irregularities of the heavenly bodies,—when every planet but one was exactly timed in sidereal horology,—when even the revolution of distant Saturn was computed to the day, the hour, the very second, of his arrival at the home station after an annual journey of nearly thirty earthly years,—Uranus alone defied arithmetic, and refused to conform to the time set down for him on the heavenly dial. No calculus could fix this extreme member of the spherul school, no equation could dispose of his rebellious eccentricity. “What ails the refractory planet?” asked the star-timing sentinels of science at their watch-posts. There was a chasm between Uranian and cis-Uranian astronomy. A bridge was needed to span that gulf. Who will build the bridge from Saturn to Uranus? Then said Leverrier, “That bridge must be a planet.” And he set himself to work to construct a planet. It must be of such and such dimensions, it must be at such and such distances from the sun and other planets, it must have such and such periods of rotation and revolution. And now, gentlemen at the sentinel-posts of science, your bridge is ready; and if at a certain hour of a certain night you will turn your telescopes on a certain quarter of the heavens, you will see a planet which was never yet noted by terrestrial eye. And the sentinels pointed their tubes, and saw Neptune emerge

from the upper deep, and respond with ray serene to the searching interrogatory of his brother orb.

But before the problems of the *Mécanique Céleste* could be solved, a higher arithmetic was required than any known to ancient science. The methods employed by the old astronomers were not applicable to these new exigencies. A bridge was needed between the old computation and the new problems. That bridge was furnished by Leibniz, the mathematical genius of the seventeenth century. He examined the methods then in use for determining the values of unknown and variable quantities, and found that by considering number as continuous, and of gradual growth, the process might be simplified, and the values of unknown quantities ascertained by equations established between their derivatives, instead of directly between themselves. The result was the infinitesimal calculus, — the serviceable tool without which astronomy could not have achieved its greatest triumphs.

Richer than science itself in illustrations of originating genius is the application of science to art. Art is the issue to which science necessarily tends. As spirit cannot remain spirit in unconditioned abstraction, but is bound to precipitate itself in material creations, so knowledge rushes into life, and science hastens to realize itself in art. In whatever department of scientific inquiry, however

remote from practical life, a new fact is discovered, the genius of humanity will sooner or later translate that fact into use.

In 1820 a Danish professor, in the midst of a lecture on electricity, was suddenly seized with a thought which so overwhelmed him that he straightway closed his delivery, adjourned with his class from the lecture-room to the laboratory, there to test his idea by a practical experiment. The experiment demonstrated that the electric current is accompanied by a magnetic circulation, and exerts, under certain conditions, a determining influence on the direction of the magnetic needle. In a word, he discovered electro-magnetism. Twelve years later, an American artist returning from Europe hears a fellow-passenger in the home-bound packet-ship recount some experiments with the electro-magnet recently witnessed in Paris. He conceives the idea that the rapid transmission of electricity might be turned to account in the communication of intelligence. After several fruitless experiments, he succeeds in constructing a machine by which the action of the electro-magnet on a lever puts in motion an iron pen, and deposits marks which, used as equivalents of alphabetic signs, produce on paper an intelligible record. Another twelve years, and a message is sent from Baltimore to Washington by this

miraculous agent. Meanwhile the pregnant idea has fructified abroad ; lightning has become a medium of communication between the capitals of Europe ; England builds a colossal steamship, which having miscarried in every other enterprise, and conjugated in her brief history all the moods and tenses of failure, serves at last a providential purpose in threading the Atlantic with an insulating cable which binds the hemispheres in social converse. In less than fifty years from the date of Oersted's experiment, the Old World is wired to the New ; continent converses with continent by electro-magnetism. At this rate, how long will it be before the whole earth, girdled round and round with electric lines of intelligence, shall repair the disaster of Babel, and have all her children united once more in conscious communication ?

One more illustration of the many which suggest themselves. There has grown up of late an art which, though strictly mechanical in its methods, is nearly allied to beautiful art in its products, and surpasses beautiful art in its faithful rendering of nature,—the art by which the sun is made to copy and fix the pictures he paints on the eye. When we gaze on a beautiful or beloved object which time and distance must soon remove, the desire arises to have what is next to the object itself,—the “counterfeit presentment” that shall repro-

duce the image when the original is withdrawn. The frolic grace of childhood, the radiant bloom of youth, are charms which the swift years are hastening to obliterate. The fond parent whose house these visions of beauty bless is anxious to preserve in the impress what he cannot retain in the life. The tourist bound for distant lands, intending protracted absence, would fain leave behind some image of himself that may represent him in the home circle, and take with him the images of his beloved. The same tourist bound for home desires some memorial that shall reproduce for him in after years the scenes and wonders of foreign lands. The painter's art may, to some extent, supply these wants for such as are able to command its service. But the products of pencil and brush are luxuries not accessible to all. A cheaper artist has been secured for these occasions. The same celestial limner that painted the originals is engaged by modern invention to repeat the picture in miniature and portable form. Photography answers the demand of unerring accuracy in the product, with the smallest cost in the process. The history of this invention illustrates the opportuneness of genius in the application of science to art. The art of photography was impossible until chemistry, the most recent of the sciences, had discovered the physical fact on which it is based.

No sooner was the fact discovered than genius was ready to appropriate and translate it into use. It was near the close of the last century that Senebier, investigating the laws of vegetable processes, discovered that the light of the sun is required to enable the leaves of plants to fix the carbon and disengage the oxygen of the earth's atmosphere. Subsequent experiments, suggested by this discovery, established the fact that the violet rays of the prismatic spectrum and those which bound it on the outer side possess the property of blackening chloride of silver. To ordinary minds there was no particular significance in this fact, no relation to pictorial art. But the genius of Daguerre came in contact with it. He saw in it the germ of a new and wondrous invention ; saw in it the possibility of pictures painted by the light, — copies of its own originals, — and gave us in the photograph a bridge of triumph from the laboratory to the easel. By means of this invention, which renders with impartial fidelity every trait in nature and art, the tourist brings home the lands he visits, in his portfolio. Venice and Rome, Switzerland and the Rhine, are sold at the print-shops, and Europe may be seen without the inconvenience of sea-sickness.

In beautiful art, as in mechanical, the mark of genius is still originality. And here this trait is

most conspicuous in the great transitions by which art passes from its rude and elementary stages to its full development, — transitions which culminate in some marked individual, who bursts the trammels of convention, and leads his age by one decisive step from bondage to freedom. Such a deliverer was Praxiteles when he set before his countrymen the daring novelty of the Cnidian Venus, proclaiming the complete beauty of the human form, and proving that beauty undraped and unadorned, to the eye of the spirit, is sufficient covering. Such a deliverer was Leonardo, who emancipated art from the bonds of Umbrian spiritualism, and instaurated simple humanity in the schools of Italy.

Next to originality, the most distinctive characteristic of genius is a right proportion between the productive and regulative forces of the mind. A certain exceptional amount of intellectual vigor being presupposed, what most distinguishes minds of the first from those of a lower order is that due command of their powers which precludes all wildness and excess, and secures for their works the crowning grace of proportion. The mind of man, like the planet he inhabits, and like all the great agencies of nature, is bipolar. It has its positive pole and its negative, — antagonist forces, which, for want of a better designation, we will call

Imagination and Reflection. Imagination is the positive force, reflection the negative; imagination creates, reflection limits and defines. The one gives the stuff, the other the form. Imagination, although the most exalted of the intellectual powers, is also the most universal. It is the first faculty which the infant exercises, and the last to become extinct in old age. Its universality is seen in dreams. The clown dreams as well as the poet; and the dreams of either are just as poetic at one time, and just as absurd at another. Dreaming is an act of pure imagination, attesting in all men a creative power which, if it were available in waking, would make every man a Dante or a Shakespeare. Our night-history is a series of poetic compositions, each one of which, however absurd as a whole, contains perhaps some one passage or trait which would make the fortune of a work of art. But though the raw capacity is universal, the trained faculty is peculiar. Out of this unorganized prose imagination the conscious artistic power must develop itself, like the winged bird from the senseless egg. The artist differs from the common man not so much in the amount of mind possessed as in the amount taken up into consciousness. Imagination alone does not constitute genius. There may be an excess of that element, unbalanced by the regulative powers. "Men of

unbounded imagination," says Dryden, "often want the poise of judgment." In actual life that excess produces, or rather constitutes, insanity,—a phenomenon very similar to that of dreaming. The maniac, like the dreamer, is taken out of his true position in space and time; but the reason of the disturbance is not the same in both. In the maniac the imagination, owing to some morbid action of the brain, overrules the impressions derived through the senses; in the dreamer the predominance of the imagination arises from the torpid state of the sentient organs. The dreamer is a madman quiescent; the madman is a dreamer in action.

In intellectual efforts the excess of imagination over the negative faculty shows itself in overstrained and fantastic productions, in poetic "ambition that o'erleaps its sell." Phaëton, in the Greek myth, borrows the sun-chariot, but, unable to guide the steeds, is hurried away by them to his own destruction. There are Phaëtons in every walk of life,—men of great capacity and vast ambition, who fail in serious undertakings for lack, as we say, of "judgment," that is, of negative power. They are carried away by great conceptions which they are unable to manage and bring to successful execution. They have the positive element of genius, imagination, but want reflection,—that reaction of the mind on its own forces which fixes their

limits and binds them with law and form. Unlimited force is force without effect. The sun's rays would be powerless without the refracting and reflecting planets, which oppose their denser spheres to the prodigal efflux. The planets would fly asunder and be dissipated in *nebulae* without the centripetal force, which negatives their eager striving for limitless expansion. The vegetable growths of the earth would exhaust themselves in rank excess of leaf and stalk, and never ripen into fruit, were it not for the concentrative power which checks this overgrowth, and, reducing the volume for the sake of the product, collects the luxuriant juices of the plant into edible pulp and marrow. What the centripetal power is to the planet, what concentration is to the plant, that reflection is to the mind, — the power which sets bounds, which corrects and defines, which moulds and perfects and renders available the raw material of imagination.

For want of this negative power unbalanced minds become the victims of their own ideality. Like the magician's apprentice in Goethe's deep fable, they are drowned by the spirits they evoke. As artists, as poets, they often astonish, but never satisfy. They lacerate the soul with over-excitement; but genius is always self-possessed. The masters in art know how to lay as well as to sum-

mon ; they command the spirits they conjure, and dismiss them promptly when their work is done.

“ In die Ecke
Besen ! Besen !
Seid's gewesen ! ”

They never harrow with excessive emotion. Whatever horrors their subject may bring, the general harmony is not disturbed. If they summon Furies, as in the “ Eumenides ” and in “ Macbeth,” they put music in their mouths and a solemn measure in their feet. If they picture deeds of violence, as in “ Othello,” they half envelop them in their own deep shadows. They “ use all gently ; ” “ in the very torrent, tempest, and whirlwind ” of their “ passion ” they “ acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.” Whether dealing with elemental fury or wielding the lightnings of vengeance, they never transgress the severe boundary line of beauty, and “ o’erstep not the modesty of nature.” With the grandest themes they combine the most diligent details ; for genius is quite as apparent in elaboration as in conception. It has not only to create the soul of a work, but to mould, part by part, the body that soul is to inhabit. The flow of thought and feeling, when tending to issues the most tremendous, must be guided with studied care and measured strokes through subtleties the most perplexing, — through

the marble folds of tangled serpents to Laocoön struggles, through difficult flesh-tints and anatomical processes to miracles of pictured passion, through rhythmic cadences to Aias' rage and Faust's despair. In works like these, where passion gives soul to art, and art gives form to passion, true genius unites intense fervor with intenser calm, the fiercest glow of conception with the utmost sobriety of judgment. However imagination may soar, reason must hold it in check. However passion may seethe and foam, a reconciling thought must span the tumult, as the rainbow spans Niagara.

Genius should be carefully discriminated from talent, with which it is apt to be confounded. Talent sometimes culminates into the altitude of genius, but is never at home on those august heights. It is the forced hyperbole of the rocket, not the easy swell of the Alps. Talent is some one faculty unusually developed ; genius commands all the faculties. The one is a distinct quality ; the other, the entire man. Talent manufactures ; genius creates. From a summer full of roses and berries talent concocts its essences and preserves ; but genius is the summer itself, which grows the roses and berries of its own fecundity. Talent is phenomenal, — a spectacle which we contemplate as something foreign and external ; but genius makes us a party to

its doings, — it carries us with it like the course of things. Works of talent are accidental; they might not have happened, or might be other than they are, without seriously affecting the issues of life. But works of genius seem a necessity of nature, — as if they could not be other than they are, and could not but have been. I can as easily imagine Italy or England left out of the map of Europe, as I can the “*Divina Commedia*” or “*Hamlet*” expunged from the world’s literature. Talent egotizes, and is always reminding you of itself; it is always conscious. But genius, sufficient to itself, never seems to know what it does. Like nature, it informs its creations with a spirit everywhere present, but nowhere egoistically prominent. Like nature, it works with equal ease and equal satisfaction in the highest and the lowest, and never seems in one thing more than another to take either pleasure or pride. It performs trifles with an air which makes them seem great, and performs wonders with an air which makes them seem trifles. With equal hand it dispenses thunder-bolts and thistle-down; thinks as much of the robin’s note as it does of the ocean’s roar, as much of the daisy in the rock-cleft as it does of the cataract by whose spray it is nourished. It makes the most refractory problems seem absurdly easy, so adroit the simplicity with which it handles them; as

men of great muscular strength make the bodies they lift seem divested of their gravity. We wonder less at the ready solution than we do at our own stupidity, which failed to discover it. As in the story of Columbus and the egg, while school-learning ponders and plods, genius, with easy assurance, marches straight to the goal.

What somnambulism is to ordinary sleep, that genius is to ordinary waking,—a conscious clairvoyance, as somnambulism is an unconscious one. It is a higher waking; it dissolves the dream-band, which in ordinary men interposes between the subject and the object, lifts the heavy lid, and informs with new and sincere perceptions the quickened sense. Something of prophetic insight is proper to it. When Copernicus propounded the soli-central hypothesis, astronomers objected that if his position were correct, Venus ought to have phases like the moon. Copernicus, nothing abashed, admitted the inference, but immediately added that if men should ever come to see Venus more distinctly, they would find that she had phases. This was before the invention of the telescope. When that instrument was given to science, one of its earliest fruits was the discovery of the phases of Venus. The composition of the diamond was conjectured by Newton on theoretic grounds, before it was ascertained by Lavoisier; and Goethe,

in his "Morphology," anticipated some of the leading discoveries of modern science.

Genius, in close *rapport* with nature, discovers new expressions in the old familiar face of things, and so enlarges the vocabulary of metaphor. Until Shakspeare spoke of moonlight sleeping, the peculiar expression of a lunar reflection had never been exactly defined. Now that the word has been spoken, we wonder that any other could ever have been applied to it. "Who," says Coleridge, "has not a thousand times seen snow fall upon water? Who has not watched it with a new feeling from the time when he read Burns's comparison of sensual pleasure to

‘Snow that falls upon a river, —
A moment white, then gone forever’ ?”

Above all, genius is humane. It esteems nothing common or unclean; it is no respecter of persons. In politics it is oftenest found on the side of the people, as against exclusive and prescriptive rights. Talent is exclusive, because conventional. Holding not of original nature, but of custom, it exaggerates the artificial distinctions which custom has established. Genius absolves from the ban of convention; it restores to common life its sacred rights. Wherever it appears, humanity is renewed.

I have spoken of genius as manifest in science and art; but these are by no means its exclusive province. Its characteristics are nowhere more conspicuous than in action. There are deeds which bear its stamp as unmistakably as the masterpieces of art. When Themistocles, by a ruse, cuts off the retreat of the Allies, provokes the enemy's attack, and risks the destinies of Greece on a single battle; when Cæsar confounds Pompey at Pharsalus with a fourth cohort; when William of Normandy scuttles the ships which have brought him and his counts from the coast of France, shutting up his expedition within the alternative of victory or death; when Arnold von Winkelried at the battle of Sempach breaks the Austrian line by gathering the enemy's lances in his arms; when Cromwell with a stamp of his foot dissolves the Long Parliament "for the glory of God and the good of the people;" when Israel Putnam at Reading baffles the British dragoons by urging his horse over the impracticable precipice; when Napoleon I. with forced marches crosses the Alps and surprises the Austrians on the plains of Lombardy,—I discern in those acts a power akin to that which makes the greatness of Kepler or Michael Angelo.

Is it asked to what individuals on the roll of fame the praise of genius is especially due? The

question is one which craves liberal handling. It will not bear a peremptory answer. It is a question on which no one likes that another should dogmatize. The number is small of those to whom all will accord the foremost rank in their Valhalla. The stars of first magnitude in the intellectual firmament are soon catalogued. Some dozen names from Homer to Goethe are all that three thousand years of Indo-Germanic culture have inscribed among the *dii majores* of poetry; a few more in science, and as many in the plastic arts.

To an American jealous of national fame the question presents itself, What is our part and lot in this matter? What have we that may vie with the splendid examples of the Old World?

The bane of American genius is popularity, the pursuit and the tyranny of the popular vote. Without the popular vote no American is great or blest. Our heaven is an elective privilege; not to be popular is the American hell. So the custom of the ballot extends its sway over letters and art; no standard of success is acknowledged but a numerical one. So many readers, so many copies sold, so much merit: as if intellectual pre-eminence, like political, could be conferred by the ballot-box! The writer will never prosper with that prosperity which the genuine artist desires,

who has the fear of the majority before his eyes, or thinks more of his readers' judgment than his own. The best works are never popular.

As to the influence of foreign models, which is thought by some to act unfavorably on native genius, I can see no hindrance in that direction. European art can no more extinguish ours than the old European could preclude the new, or Sophocles extinguish Schiller. Other minds are to native genius but so much nature, one among the many ingredients in the common soil from which by its own elective chemistry it draws its life.

There is a periodicity in the world of mind as in the world of material nature. Epochs of creative power recur at certain, as yet incalculable, intervals in the course of time. Every zone receives in its turn the full illumination of the sun of history. No doubt this nation will have in its turn, as others before it have had, its golden age of intellectual glory. And when that age arrives, the American poet or prophet or sage who shall worthily represent the mind of this continent will find his place prepared for him by more commanding antecedents, his work reinforced by ampler resources, than ever yet fell to the lot of genius.

THE LORDS OF LIFE.

TWO factors co-operate in every organized being to make it what it is. All animated nature, including man, is the product of the two.

We will call them Idea and Accident.

By Idea I mean the interior principle in each subject, the proper self of the individual, the distinctive type of the kind.

By Accident I mean whatever in any way affects the development, modifies the property, or determines the manifestation of the individual or the kind.

I use the word idea in the original Platonic sense of a theorem, or *forma formans*, prescribing and enduing the *forma formata* in Nature's kinds,—the ultimate law of its being.¹

In works of human art, design, that is, an idea of what is to be, must precede and direct creation. A house is not built without a plan. Can we suppose

¹ "Lord Bacon, the British Plato, describes the laws of the material universe as the ideas in nature. 'Quod in natura naturata lex, in natura naturante idea dicitur.'" — COLERIDGE: Church and State.

it otherwise in Nature's laboratory? Must not idea there also precede production?

The Hebrew poet understood this; he platonized by anticipation when he wrote: "Thine eyes did see my substance while yet unformed. In thy book were all things written while as yet there was none of them."

It is the fault of the doctrine of "evolution," as commonly presented, in its application to vegetable and animal organisms, that it makes no account of this agency; it does not recognize the plastic function of ideas, although heredity, on which it insists, is nothing else. It knows, or it emphasizes, but one function in Nature, — accident; it sees in man, brute, and plant only what time and circumstance have made them.

But when we observe how like in Nature produces like, how always the acorn brings forth the oak, and never willow or ash, the lion a lion, and not a bear; when we mark the continuance, age after age, of certain types, which are only ideas stamped on stuff, — we must admit, I think, that ideas are controlling factors in the universe of things. The production of like by like is intelligible only on this supposition; otherwise it would be only occasional, accidental.

Ideas are the forms of creatures present to the creative mind prior to the actual existence of those

creatures. Creation, or evolution, is the embodiment and presentation of those ideas to the finite mind.

Ideas are motives which act from within outward ; accidents are motives which act from without inward. Ideas belong to science ; accidents to history.

In what proportion do these factors combine in human life ? What is their comparative influence on human destiny ?

It is often affirmed that circumstances make the man ; that character and destiny are the product of influences that have acted on us from without ; that we are what those influences have made us, and could not, with such motives, have been other than we are ; that had circumstances been different we should have developed differently, it might have been better, or it might have been worse. We might have figured as heroes of history or as saints of the Church ; or we might, as evil-doers and felons, have incurred the reprobation of mankind. It is the fault of circumstance that we are not Washingtons or Howards ; it is the favor of accident that we are not Borgias and Robespierres. The poet's fancy could suppose in a clodhopper of Stoke-Pogis a possible Milton.

This view of man overlooks the element of individuality, or makes individuality itself an accident. If all that before our birth contributed to make us

what we are ; if pre-natal as well as post-natal influences are to be reckoned as circumstance, — then it is unquestionably true, or rather, it is an identical proposition, that circumstances make the man ; for then circumstances *are* the man.

I understand by circumstance external surroundings, local and social conditions ; and to these must be conceded, no doubt, an immense influence on human destiny.

Consider the influence of locality on the intellectual and moral life. The highest culture, the sciences and arts, have their geographical limits. A narrow belt of earth — the strip included between the twentieth and the sixtieth degree of north latitude — comprises all the great lights of the world's history. And among the nations embraced in those limits, what differences, what inequalities, according as climate and topographical peculiarities — a little more heat, a little more cold, mountains and sea — have moulded the genius and cast the lot ! How different the European of the North and the European of the South, Protestant Sweden and Catholic Spain ! How unlike the Swiss mountaineer and the maritime Dutch !

Then note the action of social appointments on individual lives — the influence of family, church, education, vicinage, example. How mighty these agencies for good or for evil ! Family : the charac-

ter of the parents, their social status, their example, — how inevitably these act on the child in that plastic period when the soul is responsive to every impression, when everything that comes in contact with it leaves its mark. Who will predict for the child of the low-lived and vicious the career we expect for the offspring of the high-fortuned, the noble and refined? Who for the *gamin*, the waif of the street, the lot we prognosticate for the well-to-do citizen's well-nurtured hope?

Bodily constitution, health, and disease: who can measure the influence of these, or guess how deeply they may enter into the life of the soul? how far physical accident may sway the will and shape the life?

Other influences, unknown, incalculable, come in for their share in the casting of every lot. Every circumstance, every accident to which human nature is subjected, will have its influence for good or evil.

But are these influences fatal? Do they alone decide man's destiny? A child is this moment cast upon the world, —

“ Ut sævis projectus ab undis
Navita : ”

what shall come of it? As yet a mere capability, apparently undetermined, infinitely determinable: whereunto shall it grow? Will you cast its horo-

scope? Latent in that lump of flesh there may be, for aught we know, a sage or a fool, a villain or a saint. If circumstance makes the man, the circumstances into which he is born, or those which await him after years, have predetermined or will inevitably determine him this or that among the wide varieties of character which life presents. Know the circumstances, and your horoscope is infallible; given the accidents, you have the man.

But on this supposition there *is no man*; human nature disappears; the individual is only a topic of fortune, an arena for the play of chance. Reason revolts from such a conclusion. Closer examination will discern behind the accidents a substance, a substantial being whom they befall; will find that man is what he is by reason of something in him, and not altogether through what happens to him; that in fact the idea in each subject is the more decisive factor in his destiny.

Let us trace the operation of this interior motive.

And first, as regards mankind at large, mark the force of ideas as shown in the phenomena of race. Observe how differently human nature develops itself in the Aryan, the Negro, the Malay. All these partake of one humanity. The essential attributes of man are common to all. Why is it that only one of these races has made constant,

enduring progress in civilization, while the rest, after reaching a certain stage of development, have remained stationary or declined? Why is it that the highest culture has been attained by multitudes of the one, and by only here and there an exceptional individual in the others? Why has not the negro attained the same eminence and made equal progress in science and the arts with the European? Circumstances against him? Because of slavery? How came he to be enslaved? It was not in him, and is not in him, to develop a commanding civilization of his own.

Why is it that the red men who inhabited this continent for unknown ages before the European took possession of it have left such slight traces of their existence on the soil? The country was a wilderness then, and would have remained a wilderness still, in aboriginal hands. See what a different aspect it presents since the Saxons have had possession of it. Here are the same rivers and harbors, the same lakes and mountains, which the Indian knew and named. See what has been made of them by a different race! These rivers which once rolled idly to the main have been made to drive the wheel of industry, and to bear the products of the distant inland to the coast. These harbors are converted into floating forests, these lakes are made highways of traffic, these mountains have

been forced to render up the secret riches of their trust. Here the circumstances are the same, but a different idea supervenes. To the red man they were barren; given in marriage to European ideas they become prolific of endless use.

The preponderance of idea over accident in human life is seen in the propagation from age to age of those physical and moral features which characterize a particular nation or tribe, as in the case of the gypsies, — the immortal tramps, — of the Jews of the Dispersion, who have propagated through two millenniums an inextinguishable type.

It is seen in the persistence from generation to generation of family traits, — the Habsburg, the Bourbon, the Stuart.

In individuals the predominant idea is not so conspicuous, is not always apparent, for the reason that individuals are known to us only as manifested within the limits of a single life-history. In individuals it is not easy to distinguish between the phenomenal and the real, between the historic manifestation and the fundamental type. Yet we often hear it said of this or that individual that Nature intended him to be something different from what he has come to be. It is certain that Nature never designed Cœlestine V. to be pope, nor Henry VI. of England to be king. Heine says of Robespierre and Immanuel Kant that Nature

designed them to be shopkeepers, to weigh coffee and sugar; but Fate decreed that they should weigh something else: that the one should place a King, and the other a God, in his scales.

Nevertheless, something of the original character, the true idea of the man, will show itself beneath the accidents of his lot. Cromwell would not have been Lord Protector of England but for the maladministration of Charles I. His character as history presents it would have been different, or rather history would not have presented it at all, had he never left, —

“ His private garden, where
He lived, reservèd and austere,
As if his highest plot
To plant the bergamot.”

But, on the other hand, only a character such as Cromwell's was in its native quality, could have filled that place. Napoleon Bonaparte would never have been the prodigy he was, but for the French Revolution, and might have led an unnotorious life; but Bonaparte under any circumstances would have been an organizing and commanding power.

The “ prohibitionist ” pleads that the dram-shop is the cause of nine tenths of the crimes which desolate society. The plea may be valid in civic philosophy, but a searching psychology puts a different interpretation on the facts. The dram-shop is no

doubt the *occasion* of a vast amount of criminal acts. The dram-shop *develops* the sot, but does not *make* him. The man who under any conditions could become a sot and, under the stimulus of intoxication, commit murder, must have had something in the original make of him, some pre-natal element of weakness or wickedness, which predisposed him to be the victim of temptation. The overt act, the sinful growth, may be the result of accident; the essential nature never. The character which the world sees and judges, rewards or punishes, may be very different from the real typical character, the underlying nature, which the world knows not, which, it may be, the individual himself knows not, but which carries the secret of his final destiny.

Conceding to external conditions all that can fairly be claimed for them, there is yet in the bosom of every man a force which transcends them all. No power which is brought to bear upon him from without can finally countervail the original intent of the unfathomable soul. The difference between characters which we call original and those which we deem common-place is perhaps but a difference of more or less activity of temperament. In the one case the originality finds expression, in the other it is latent. But, at bottom, every man is original; there is more of our own

than of all other men in every one of us. Much of what we seem to be, our culture, our behavior, is only costume. We are clothed upon by tradition and custom and example; but pierce these wrappers, and you find an original nature which these may mask, but not efface. When we look from a distance on a well-drilled company of soldiers on parade, they seem as one man,—dress, movement, gesture, all agreeing. But draw nearer; go through the ranks; question this and that bayonet; and you will find that each is a world by himself, differing, it may be, as widely from his fellow as if they inhabited different spheres. Each has his own peculiar experience, his joys and his woes. Heaven and Hell may march shoulder to shoulder in one platoon. So in the grand parade of life. Fashion dresses us in regimentals, class and calling range us in platoons, politics and religion marshal us in battle array; we fight under given standards, we practise the same manœuvres, we march and mess together. Society seems to be an army of puppets moved and directed by a few leading minds. Nevertheless each member of each company is fighting on his own hook; each has a discipline of his own besides the manual exercise of his corps; each has his own battle besides the general *mêlée*; each has his private victory or defeat besides the common gain or loss. We are all more or less the creatures

of our time; but John is still John, and Peter is Peter: all the discipline of church and state, and all the drill of custom, will not efface the inborn johnneity and petriety.

“You are proud of your ancestors,” said Mirabeau to one of the *noblesse*; “I too am an ancestor.” Every man is his own ancestor, and every man is his own heir. He devises his own future, and he inherits his own past. All else that pertains to us, all wherewith accident overlays us, be it good or evil, we shall finally outgrow and leave behind. The underlying idea in us accident cannot change. As the river receives upon its bosom sun and shade, and melts into itself the winter’s snow, and floats or absorbs, or deposits in its bed whatever is committed to its waves; and whether it winds through civil fields or waters the roots of primeval forests, is still the same river, replenished from the same fountain, pursuing in darkness and in light its predestined course,—so the individual character as shaped from within, more potent than all the influences that pour into it, more prevailing than all the accidents it encounters, resolves at last all accident and influence into itself, and still over all that comes in contact with it will finally assert its own.

“Nor time nor force that inwrought type can sever
Which through thy life unfolds itself forever.”

And so to every man at birth is allotted an estate of unknown extent and inexhaustible capacity. Go where we will, in all our journeyings we can never out-travel the limits of that domain; happen what may in the unforeseeable future, there can come to us nothing from abroad so effective for good or ill as that which we grow by the action of our own wills on native ground.

This view of human destiny concerns not merely the few years of our mortality; its import reaches behind and beyond this present life.

I have said that all that is congenital in us constitutes our proper type. Whence that type? Evidently it must be the result of ante-natal conditions acting on a pre-existing soul. And so I infer that earthly experiences acting on the soul in this present life will modify and reinforce its distinctive immortal type.

The question of immortality as commonly apprehended is confused by want of precise definition. In this compound being what is it that survives the event of death? We need to distinguish between the person and the self. To vulgar apprehension they are one and inseparable. The prevailing opinion supposes a personal immortality; it supposes an unbroken thread of consciousness which shall carry over the remembered experiences

of this life into the one which succeeds, so that Quidam in all future states of existence shall recollect himself as the Quidam of this. It regards such recollection as constituting the very essence of immortality. A sufficient refutation of this delusion is the fact that we do not in this life recall a previous existence, which nevertheless the soul must have had; for who that deeply ponders the matter can believe that the soul which is born into this life is a new creation?

The person is one, the individual, the true self, is another. The person is a mask which, with all its belongings, dissolves at death, or only survives for a while as a dream of the past; the self is immortal.¹

Immortal, also, is that which Buddhism terms the "Karma," the sum of our doing, the character we enact, the thread which we spin by the action of our will while lodged in the flesh. This constitutes a string of causes and effects, which again are causes, without end.

In this "Karma" we have another of the Lords of Life. Its sway extends beyond the person; it operates for good or evil in the world we leave behind; it reacts on the *ego* of a new birth, and affects our destiny for indefinite time.

¹ "Though personalities ever shift, the one line of life, on which they are strung like beads, runs on unbroken." — Esoteric Buddhism, p. 69.

To sum up all in a word, — character is destiny. Accidents vanish; the idea remains. New spheres will supply new accidents and develop new persons in the ever new-flowering, imperishable Self. This aboriginal Self, the subject-bearer of the idea, survives with the character it has wrought for itself from the discipline of countless lives. All else is “fallings from us, vanishings.”







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